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THE

MOUNTAIN WILD FLOWER:

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF

MRS. MARY ANN BISE,

A LADY WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE, IN THE VALLEY OF THE GREEN RIVER.

BY

CHARLES LESTER.

The noblest spirits sometimes grow up in the obscurest spheres.
CHANNING.

NEW-YORK:
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1838.

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ERRATA.

The following corrections would have been made if it had been possible for the Author to read the proofs. Some of them are very important, changing the whole scope of the paragraph.

Page iv—8 lines from bottom, for stronger, read *stranger.*
" 11—3 " " top, for cirumstances, read *privations.*
" 38—14 " " " a comma, and not a period after series.
" 47—14 " " " for there, read *then.*
" 95—bottom line, for august, read *unjust.*
" 104—9 lines from top, for me, read *it.*
" 109—8 " " bottom, for died, read *dried.*
" 109—bottom line, for to efforts, read to *her* efforts.
" 120—13 lines from top, for wildliness, read *wilderness.*
" 121—6 " " bottom, for too, read *to.*
" 188—3 " " " for poor, read *wretch.*
" 223—5 " " top, for waited, read *hailed.*
" 233—bottom line, for house, read *house of God.*
" 238—8 lines from bottom, for into, read *onto.*
" 240—11 " " top, for my, read *every.*
" 240—12 " " " for my, read *every.*

THIS VOLUME

Is particularly, and most respectfully, addressed to the young females of the American Zion; accompanied with the earnest prayer, that they may be inspired, by a contemplation of the character here drawn, to the attainment of those illustrious virtues and that eminent holiness which adorned the life of their sister who has passed before them to heaven,

By the Author.

Mr. E. French.

Dear Sir.

It has afforded me much pleasure to learn that you have in press "The Mountain Wild Flower," by the Rev. Charles Lester. The subject of the memoir was a member of my church, and I was minutely acquainted with her history. After examining the MS. I am satisfied that it is an accurate and faithful picture of her life and character; a picture highly drawn, but true to the original. Mrs. Bise was considered by us all a most extraordinary woman. Truth, in this case, is not only stronger, but much better than fiction.

Mr. Lester is fully adequate to his enterprise; and it is my decided impression that his work will be appreciated by a generous public.

Sincerely your friend, and

respectfully your obe't ser't,

Timothy Woodbridge.

Austerlitz, May 5, 1838.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In the summer of 1837 I passed a few days in the quiet retreat of the pastor of Green River. And as I wandered through that sweet valley and over its circumjacent hills, I was surprised at the affectionate and reverent mention of the name of Mrs. Bise.

Her character seemed to be stamped deeply upon the hearts of all who knew her, and her memory was embalmed in their tenderest affections.

She was spoken of with enthusiasm and tears; and I often heard the desire expressed that a sketch of her life and character might be written.

On this hint I took up my pen, and now present to the reader this unvarnished tale.

I have often read portions of it to those who knew her best, who have assured me that not one feature is overdrawn by a single shade.

The facts, in regard to her intellectual power and religious eminence, are wonderful; but who shall limit the intellectual gifts bestowed by "The Father of Lights," or the moral excellence produced by the grace of the Spirit?

If this work is not written in the stereotype form of Religious Biographies, it may disarm the severity of Criticism to remark, that the Author has marked out a track for himself, and has prepared himself for the undertaking, by avoiding reading a single book in this department of literature while writing it, or for a year previous.

He has been guided only by the nature of the subject and the impulses of his own feelings.

It may be hoped that the appearance from time to time of sketches of women, remarkable for piety and intellect, may exert a conservative influence upon the female mind of our country, which is frittered away and misguided by the frivolous literature with which we are flooded; and literature, too, (if it merit the name) which is produced, with the most entire carelessness in regard to its moral tendency.

Such an effect is vastly desirable when we consider the mighty influence which is put forth by the

females of our country in shaping the character and destiny of our population.

The Author concludes this short Preface with the touching remark of Johnson in the last number of the Rambler :—"I shall never envy the honors which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I may be numbered among the writers who have given ardor to virtue and confidence to truth."

Consecrating this humble offering at the foot of the Cross, he bends his eye up to the "Mercy seat," and invokes the blessing of the Spirit in the words of the Great Poet,

> "Gentle breath of yours, my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails."

West Stockbridge, Mass.
June 1, 1838.

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MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

" When breezes are soft and skies are fair,
I steal me an hour from study and care,
And hie me away to the woodland scene,
Where wanders the stream with waters of green ;
As if the bright fringe of herbs on its brink
Had given their stain to the wave they drink ;
And they whose meadows it murmurs through
Have named the stream from its own fair hue."

BRYANT'S GREEN RIVER.

NEAR the eastern border of Columbia County, New-York, lies the sequestered valley of Green River. It is watered by the stream which has given to the valley its name, and afforded the muse of Bryant a theme at once classic and beautiful. In his " greener years," when he came to this quiet spot to angle in its waters, he caught the inspiration which lingered around them, and the melody of his song is like the sweetness of their own music.

It is formed by the junction of tributary rivulets which flow down the vast amphitheatre of hills that begird the valley. A late distinguished clergyman remarked to the pastor of the place, that he always made his journeys between Albany and Hartford through this valley, to enjoy the magnificence of its scenery. "For," said he, "it is without exception the most enchanting landscape I ever beheld. The Vale of Tempe, which so intoxicated the Greeks with delight, I fancy was not equal to it."

This sheltered spot gave birth to Mary Ann Reed. She was born on the 5th April, 1811, and was the youngest of nine children. Her parentage was obscure, but highly respectable. She inherited a very delicate constitution, and her friends cherished no hope of her escaping an early grave.

In listening to the story of her sufferings under the rude hand of disease, I have often been reminded of the touching picture of the frailty of human life in the Night Thoughts :—

> "While man is growing, life is in decrease;
> And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.
> Our birth is nothing but our death begun;
> As tapers waste that instant they take fire."

Disease fastened itself upon her tender frame, and for a number of years she trembled on the verge of death. She seemed destined by an over-ruling Providence to depart soon from the scene of her suffering. But He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, sustained her steps, and the tenderness of a sister's affection watched the cradle of her infancy.

Years passed by, and brought her new strength as they came; and it was hoped that she might yet possess a healthy constitution. Her faculties began to burst forth with uncommon brilliancy, and her form assume its fair and finished proportions.

One ray of light for a few years illumined the obscurity of her path. She had a kind and generous father, and his counsel and affection poured joy into her bosom, which was in after-time bared to the bleak winds of adversity. He owned a small farm on one of the slopes which command a view of the valley and cultivated hills around. Industry and simple habits insured their large family a comfortable subsistence; and joy diffused itself through their humble dwelling. As the wild blasts of winter swept through the valley and howled over the mountains, a

bright fire blazed upon their old-fashioned hearth, around which were clustered happy hearts, beating to the lively joy of domestic life.

I love to dwell upon this feature of Mary's history; for it is a green spot, the only oasis of social happiness she ever found, till, after years of loneliness and sorrow, she could bless God for a sweet little cottage of her own.

I have heard the traveller of the eastern desert describe his joy when he reached the shades and fountains of a verdant spot, and heard him tell his grief as he left those shades and fountains, and plodded on his toilsome and sultry way amidst surrounding sterility. Kindred to his own are my feelings on leaving this tranquil scene, consecrated by Mary's early joys, to follow her through a wild, cheerless region, "fanned by no breeze and enlivened by no murmur."

It is painful to record it, but the frost of death entered, and marred the scene. At this tender season, when Mary had just begun to twine her affections around her fond father's heart, and forget her little sorrows on his bosom,

"He journeyed to the land of souls."

His death left a void in their little circle, which time never could fill.

Oh! how many young and buoyant hopes are entombed in a kind father's grave! How crushing is that dispensation which quenches the light of a father's counsel and affection forever! There is a corner of the heart which is never chilled but by one misfortune; there is a chord in the bosom which vibrates but once in the longest existence; it wakes all its woe when the cold earth sends back upon the ear its unearthly echo as it falls on the coffin of a beloved father.

The light of the family was now extinguished, the home of Mary was the abode of blighted and crushed affection. She did not seek for sympathy or consolation where Nature pointed—her surviving parent; for, in her tenderest years, she had sought for it there, in vain.

The family was now to be dispersed, and no more to be sheltered by one common roof.

I can readily conceive that such a scene as this inspired those touching lines of Gray:

"For him no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knee the envied kiss to share."

They were to be driven out upon the wide world to buffet its storms and be assailed by em-

barrassments and misfortunes, which never molested their own happy fireside. While they were one family, and the hand of time had not divided their circle, these rough waves broke harmlessly around their dwelling. But at midnight a voice was heard, " Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." The summons of death was the knell of Mary's domestic happiness; for in the decease of her father she lost her all, and was left an orphan indeed. Charity to the living demands of us to say no more. Let the judgment day reveal the sequel.

" Her childhood was baptized in tears."

CHAPTER II.

"I go, I go!—And must mine image fade
From the green spots wherein my childhood played,
By my own streams?
Must my life part from each familiar place,
As a bird's song, that leaves the woods no trace
Of its lone themes?"

MRS. HEMANS.

IT was the misfortune of Mary to be torn from her home almost every year. Her family removed from place to place, and she was thus deprived of one efficient cause of benign influence. For it is essential in the formation of finished character, that the heart shall have fastened upon the familiar and endearing associations of Home—that these associations shall be permanent, and enlist the noblest emotions of the soul. The character and the feelings depend very much upon the nature of every-day scenes.

There cannot exist in the bosom any very ardent love of home and the family hearth, unless that hearth is consecrated by a thousand happy recollections. When we are torn from our fire-

sides, just as the heart begins to beat with animation and delight to the remembrances which cluster around them, the guardian influences of home lose their power ; we sigh for the bliss of past days, and their brightness only now and then gleams upon the bosom, to awaken the consciousness "how much I have lost."

Such a fortune would have clouded the spirit and chilled the sensibilities of almost any other heart ; for when we are expelled from our early, our first shelter from the agitations and turmoil of the world, how often do we murmur at the dispensations of Providence, and give up the asylum of our infancy, not only with tears, but complaint.

But although for many years Mary had no rest for the sole of her foot, yet she kissed the hand that dealt the blow ; for her experience it was true that "what God wills he also sanctifies."

She trod a secluded walk of life, and in her biography no events of excitement or stirring incident will be recorded ; but her fortunes were so peculiar, her life so remarkable, and her exit so brilliant, that with striking appositeness may be inscribed upon every page of her history this sublime and revealed truth,

"There is a Divinity that shapes our end."

The unsettled state of her family caused her many privations. Her opportunities of education were extremely limited. She was secluded by the habits of the family from general or cultivated society.

A part of this early period of her life was passed in a neighboring town, where she was in a great degree deprived of the means of literary improvement and religious instruction.

"The sound of the church-going bell" was not heard at the humble dwelling of her mother. A public library never poured its lights over her path. But her ardent desire for an education, prompted her to attend with great assiduity such district schools as were successively sustained within her reach.

But she was often interrupted by severe attacks of illness, which usually confined her to the house for some weeks; and it is well known that the common schools of this country are not adapted to give much impulse to mind or fan the fires of Genius. They are not equal to the exigencies of the age, conducted on the present system; and were it not for other and superior

facilities afforded to the American youth, the genius of our nation would languish and die. It would seem to an impartial and enlightened observer, who should contemplate our common schools, that they were devised to cloud the mind, corrupt the heart, and reduce taste and manners to the standard of vulgar life. Genius cannot soar in such an atmosphere,—it cannot strike root in such a soil.

Yet Mary had no other advantages than those she derived from this source, and it is probable that she never was in school more than six months in her life; so multiplied and distressing were the obstacles which opposed her eminence. But she possessed a genius which could not be crushed, and it broke forth with great strength in her youthful days.

Her taste for reading was ardent, and early developed. While her companions were spending their leisure hours in the usual sports of childhood, her's were passed in some corner of the room, or secluded apartment of the dwelling, in drinking at the sources of knowledge.

Her station in life was eminently unpropitious to the cultivation of mind and polish of charac-

ter, and circumstances the most trying were mingled in her humble lot. But her native energy of character rose superior to all the circumstances of misfortune and privation, which crowded upon the threshold of her career.

It will be necessary to remember these circumstances, for they add a lustre to her future attainments.

Not only was she borne down thus early in life by sickness and privation, but she experienced a thousand nameless trials of feeling in her domestic relations, which would have destroyed the elasticity of a common mind.

After the death of her father, her home was stripped of its charms, for to her it was not the abode of peace or serenity. Her mind was cast in the finest mould, and tenderness of feeling was a chief element of her heart. She felt the slightest display of unkindness, and the source from which her miseries sprung, imparted to them a keenness and severity which cut her to the heart. Circumstances which need not be mentioned, combined to quench the light of her social existence, and annihilate the sweet and cheering charities of the fireside.

But a strong and well-balanced mind is al-

ways fruitful in resources of enjoyment, which cannot be greatly impaired by ordinary causes of disquiet and unhappiness. She retired to the peace of her own bosom for a shelter, and had recourse to higher and more magnificent fountains.

There was early observable in her a yearning of her inmost soul for literary light, let it beam from any quarter. She read with great earnestness such books as were kept in the house, or borrowed from others. But she could have access to but few books, and these were ordinarily of a common stamp. It will be necessary to attribute her superior mental attainments to other causes.

She listened with silent and wrapt attention to the conversation of intelligent persons wherever she happened to meet them.

These casual and imperfect means of information, joined to her own deep and solitary musing, produced a rapid intellectual development ; and all who were intimate in her family, spoke of Mary Ann Reed as a wonderful little girl.

Immediately after her return to the beautiful valley of Green River, she was seized with a violent fit of illness.

The pastor of the place, hearing of her sick-

ness, went to visit her. Her conversations were so attractive, that he prolonged his visit far beyond his usual custom, and left her with a sentiment of the deepest surprise at having discovered so extraordinary a character. She was at this time about ten years of age.

He spoke of her in other parts of the congregation with the greatest admiration, and often remarked that a sweet and beautiful light had made its appearance in a distant corner of the society.

The attention of many of the most amiable and intelligent inhabitants of that happy valley were quickly directed to her. Many were prompted by curiosity, and others by a love of intellectual and moral beauty, to visit her, and witness for themselves the expanding of so lovely a flower.

This formed a new era in the progress of her improvement. From this time she became intimate in the house of her pastor, and books, and other means of mental culture, were placed by the providence of God within her reach. These were almost all the facilities she ever possessed, of a literary and social character. She was now known, though on a limited scale, to a larger number of persons than before.

Had it not been for the kindness of heart, fidelity of pastoral duty, and deep love of literary attainments and moral excellence for which her pastor is so eminently distinguished, she might have been

> "born to blush unseen,
> And waste her sweetness on the desert air."

The man whose watchful sagacity discovers, and elevates to eminence and fame, a regenerated immortal spirit, places a diamond in the crown of the Redeemer which shall reflect glory upon the throne through eternal ages.

Rev. Mr. Woodbridge was one of the founders of the first Sabbath School in America, and his own, where he still presides, has been the nursery of piety and talent which have blessed the world.

The light which he pours upon its hallowed enclosure has often awakened the slumbering energies of devotion and aroused the fires of genius.

This was the home of Mary, and here she was disciplined for heaven. Her spirit, which is now born unto glory, rejoices in the day which gave birth to sabbath schools; and a mighty company,

whose salvation was effected by their glorious agency, are following their founders to their father's house.

In the midst of her religious privations she enjoyed great facilities from this source for laying up her treasures in heaven.

If the eye of a youth who has never been to a sabbath school, wanders over these pages, let me tenderly invite him to go to a sabbath school; for, dear friend, it may prove the gate of heaven to your deathless spirit.

Little more can be gathered from any source to grace this sketch, which occurred before the visit of her pastor, to which the reader's attention has already been directed.

The picture of her early years must be somewhat imperfect, for the incidents of her childhood, which would be worthy of a place here, have vanished from the minds of the few who knew her at the time. The waters have closed over many scenes of interest in her history, but they travel down the stream, and will be brought to light in the last day.

It would be exceedingly interesting and curious to trace the causes which determined her youthful character, and show how they mingled

to produce the result. It should always, we fancy, be a prime object with the biographer to perform this office. The shades of character are infinitely diversified, and it is interesting to trace the influences which imparted their tinge and decided their features.

There may be blanks in her history, which I shall not be able to fill up.

Had she moved in a more elevated sphere, she would have attracted more admiration, and impressed her characteristics deeper upon the world.

"The most brilliant part of church history," says the great Hooker, "is that which can never be written; it is reserved for the stupendous scenes of the judgment day." The same may be said of its individual members. There is a sanctuary in every pious bosom, which is known in this world only to the heart that beats there, and the Holy Ghost.

No biographer has access to this Holy of Holies.

There are many whose names will stand high on the records of heaven, whose fame never passed beyond their native valleys.

"Who through the cool sequestered vale of life
Pursue the noiseless tenor of their way."

They attract no curiosity while living, and leave no light for coming ages. The setting sun kindles no splendor on their marble, but their epitaph is engraven in more durable characters upon the heart of surviving affection. While their redeemed spirits are ranging high in the climes of bliss, as their dust slumbers in the solemn repose of the grave, curiosity or respect prompt no distant stranger to visit the scene of their rest. But the eulogy of affection is often breathed over their tomb, and when the archangel's trump breaks through their valley, they shall arise with new beauty from their ashes.

At that hour, the brightest in the annals of the redeemed, they shall flank the Great White Throne, as it comes rolling on the clouds of heaven, and receive the richest crowns which shall be awarded on that solemn occasion, while the hopes of many of the great and honored of this world shall be quenched forever.

CHAPTER III.

"But can the noble mind forever brood,
The willing victim of a weary mood,
On heartless cares that squander life away,
And cloud young Genius brightening into day?

"Yet still may hope her talisman employ,
To snatch from heaven anticipated joy:
And all her kindred energies impart,
That burn the brightest in the purest heart."

CAMPBELL'S PLEASURES OF HOPE.

We have already spoken of the cloud that enveloped the home of Mary in gloom, but, dark and dense as it was, it could not shut out from her soul the light of the Star of Bethlehem.

How high, how noble, how commanding the prerogative of the Spirit of Grace to illumine the mourner's bosom with the consolations of religion.

It will be necessary to contemplate the subject of this memoir on every page as just passing the vestibule of eternity, for from early childhood she seemed to have been overshadowed with a consciousness of her speedy departure, and a deep

but cheerful impression of the nearness and vastness of everlasting scenes.

Her life seemed like the placid beauty of Niagara's waters "ere they dash below,"—her probation like a flower suspended on that verge; baptized with the dew of death, and yet lingering awhile, and encircled with the mystic bow of the covenant, "green as an emerald."

Her countenance, her conversation, her writings, and even her hourly deportment in the walks of domestic life, all seemed tinged with the mellow light of heaven. And those who saw her most and knew her best, have told me that her presence imparted cheerfulness and solemnity to the feelings of all her associates. All this apposite to her early as well as maturer years.

Even in her tender childhood she was remarkably conscientious, and afraid of doing wrong. She trembled at the approach of sin and impiety, and was never known to tell a lie but *once* in her life.

She often said afterward, that the remembrance of that falsehood followed her like a shade, and destroyed her peace for months; and the dread of again committing that sin, forever prevented her from it till her death. The circumstances were

these. Her father sent her to bring a basin of flax-seed from the garret. When she returned, he said,

"Mary, did you spill any?" "No, father," she answered. But her horror was so great when she thought of what she had done, that she fell at his feet, and exclaimed, as she burst into tears :

"Oh, I have told a lie, papa ; I did spill a little, it was *so* full, and I was afraid you would whip me if you found it out. I am a naughty girl, and you *may* whip me, but I wont ever do so again."

Her father never had had occasion to punish her, and he possessed too much kindness of heart and propriety of family government to do it now, when his little child was weeping in penitence at his feet with a broken heart. He raised her from the floor, and clasped her to his bosom. In after-years she said that the recollection of that sin drove sleep from her pillow for many nights. This happened in her sixth year.

A short time after this, her father died. When her sister came into the room at midnight, and woke up little Mary, and told her that her father was dead, she wept, and said, "Well, H——, we ought to be glad, for *I* think father has gone to

heaven; and oh! how much better for him to be there than to dwell in this cold world."

The reader will look for the date of her conversion in this sketch, but it is impossible to determine the exact period when it took place.

The paths of the Spirit are often in the great deep. Her pastor, who is gifted with extraordinary acuteness of discernment in such matters, thinks she was converted in infancy. He once said to me, "I suppose she was always pious."

But it is a matter of little consequence, since it is perfectly evident that it occurred in early childhood. One thing at least is certain. From infancy she was guarded by the Holy Ghost. His plastic hand shaped her character and decided her tastes. Her earliest powers were consecrated at the foot of the cross; and there her genius expanded, under its hallowed and transforming light.

As soon as she had learned to read, she was often found alone with her Bible, engaged in devotional exercises, and committing it to memory.

Before her sixth year, her voice would often be heard at the still hour of evening, breathing out her soul in prayer to her heavenly father.

"'Twere almost sacrilege to sing
Those notes amid the glare of day;
Notes borne by angels' purest wing,
And wafted by their breath away."

This fact is more worthy of consideration, since she had now received no religious instruction, and neither of her parents were professors of religion.

She seemed to be the object of God's special protection during this period of privation, and when she could not bow around a family altar, she established one of her own, whose sacrifice was well pleasing in the sight of heaven. She had never been consecrated with sacramental water; but she was washed with its antitype the blood of the Lamb. I cannot conceive a more conclusive evidence of grace in the heart than is thus exhibited. It is a spectacle which excites the greatest admiration in the Christian bosom, to see a little child steal away from the paternal fireside, where no altar had been erected for God, to a distant apartment of the dwelling, and there, morning and evening, pour out her soul in the ecstacy of prayer for her beloved but unconverted parents, and the triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom on the earth. Oh! what a

worthy example for little children to follow! What a severe reproof does such a scene administer to impenitent parents, and even to some professors of religion, who not only forsake their closets, but suffer their family altars to fall to ruins! We think we are warranted in the inference, that these exercises, to which she so constantly devoted herself, from month to month and year to year, were the fruits of the Spirit. But I discover from her writings that she possessed no hope till long after this period; and when she was addressed by her friends as a Christian, she would answer in astonishment, "If you knew how wicked I am, you would have no more hope for me than I have for myself."

But the reader will observe marks of superior grace in her writings at this period, and after reading some of her letters, he may be astonished that she did not cherish a lively expectation of heaven. The difficulty may be easily solved. It did not arise from mental gloom or despondency, for she was always cheerful; but from other causes. She had fallen into a common but dreadful mistake, and, like a thousand others, she could not remember a time when her feelings

were changed. She supposed that when she was regenerated, she would discover some mighty revolution in her sentiments—possess new light —have splendid views of Jesus Christ as *her* Redeemer, &c. And in after-time, when she first cherished a hope, she was harassed with many distressing doubts; "For," said she, "I have never felt those vivid emotions and great joy which I suppose always attends a state of grace."

She supposed, too, that as soon as conversion took place, she would in a mysterious way get rid of all her sins and a consciousness of guilt. And she was so habitually humble and lowly of spirit, that she would not think herself a Christian so long as she was compelled to mourn over so much indwelling sin. She tested her actions by no other standard than the word of God; and before she had gained those lucid views she afterwards cherished of the scheme of justification by faith, she did not dare to hope.

"For," said she, "how can so vile a creature as I am be admitted to the joys and purities of heaven?" Ah! she had yet to learn the Almighty fitness and fulness of her Redeemer's atonement!

She was for a series of years a luminous mo-

nument of the truth and glory of disinterested benevolence; for she was active and devoted in Christian duty long before she gained any stimulus from a hope of heaven. She served God from the noble motives of right and duty, love of holiness, and moral excellence.

Let the reader follow on one or two pages here if it is dry, for it may be that you will find a *principle* here developed which will make or mar your fortunes beyond the grave.

It is the first impulse of the natural heart, when aroused to a consideration of the claims of religion, to ask, "Can I in this way better gratify my own selfishness? Can I get paid for being good? If so, I will be a Christian."

And in this way he goes on, stimulated by a hope of advancing his own interests, takes up a hope and joins the church, and then all is quiet. At last death strikes the blow, and he flies to the throne of God only to discover that his conviction was nothing but a fear of hell; his conversion only getting a hope that he shall escape its horrors; and that his zeal was only sustained by the hope of aggrandizing himself in eternity without any recognition of God's claims or God's feelings.

There are multitudes of such persons in the church, who can relate a brilliant experience, that will almost make a saint despair, who are influenced, in all their religious zeal and observances, only by the hope of reward; who would not keep one iota of God's good law unless they thought they could in that way better secure their own personal fortunes; who would have no motive left for serving God, unless they could be rewarded for the service.

Selfishness is the oundation principle of such religion, it is not the religion of the benevolent Saviour; for if the Bible declares one truth with more plainness and point than another, it is decidedly explicit on this: that impenitence and depravity are nothing more than a course of self-gratification, without regard to right and holiness; and that regeneration consists in a change of this disposition, so that selfishness is no longer the grand stimulus of action. The subject of it sees that he has lived without any regard to God's law or God's feelings thus far, and solely for the sake of self-gratification. He sees that this is the very essence of all sin; that it is departing from the end of his being; making war upon God's interests and kingdom, by regarding a lesser good

as the grand object of pursuit. He repents. His controlling motive of action is now changed, and he is influenced by the same motive which governs his Maker, viz. a desire to advance his glory, and the holiness and happiness of his creatures. He now asks himself in his actions, "Will this advance the glory of Christ? Is it right? Will it honor God and do good to men?"

The man who has met with this change is a new creature, and no other. And it often happens that he does not think of a hope, or possess any, and goes on serving God without any hope at all. This is the religion of benevolence. Thus it was with Mary. She was faithful in duty for years before she cherished a hope that she was "born of the Spirit."

I have dwelt with some length and earnestness upon this feature in her history, for it is a point of cardinal magnitude in practical theology. It is something more than a philosophical distinction; and its immensity of interest, as a revealed distinction and a controlling principle of holiness, is felt by all true Christians.

If the lights of inspiration assist us in forestalling any of the stupendous scenes of the Great

Day, they assure us that men shall then be tried by this standard: for nothing merits the name of repentance except abandoning sin because it is wrong, and espousing holiness because it is right; and that nothing merits the name of godliness, except those actions which are prompted by a love to God and holiness *as such.*

This disposition to practise holiness is always attended with faith in Christ, and a confidence in God's integrity in all his administration. Peace of mind is the necessary offspring of this willingness to do right, and submit to God. And a sweet consciousness is awakened in the soul, and the heart beats with ecstacy at the thought that "I am in the hands of God, who will do all his pleasure. And whether I am saved or not, whether my interests are secure or not, God will do right; and I would not have him tarnish his fame or injure his character to secure my interests. No, I would rather have all my hopes quenched for ever!"

Hence the fear of death is often banished from the soul, and the harassings of a guilty conscience no longer shake the bosom. I have known many bright examples of this truth, but none so brilliant as in the life of Mary. From early

childhood she expected soon to die; but yet she felt no fear of death at any period of her life. She would always converse about dying with cheerfulness and composure. She suffered so much from constitutional weakness, and frequent and painful attacks of illness, and also from a consciousness of her spiritual depravity, which she said pained her more than all; her social life was so dreary, that she longed to forget all her troubles in the tomb. "For," said she, "if I die, I know God will do right, and I am glad I am in the hands of a being who cannot do wrong."

She often said that she had not passed a day of freedom from bodily pain, and her sufferings were often acute and distressing. But her sister has told me that she never heard a murmur escape her lips.

For a number of years her mother was confined to her bed, and Mary's time was almost constantly passed in administering to her infirm and widowed years. This chapter of her life was one of exquisite suffering. She was too tender and delicate to endure hardships; but she was called every hour from a sick bed of her own, to minister at her mother's. But the writer recoils from a more minute picture of her woes.

Sometimes she was relieved from her task by a sister, who left her engagements in another family, or a kind neighbor who happened in, and she could have a little time left for herself. Her leisure hours were few, and filled with pain and suffering. But she gathered them all up, and consecrated them to the high and hallowed purposes of intellectual culture and advancement in holiness. After her mother had gone to sleep, she would extinguish the light, and steal out into the garden, and pass an hour during the milder season in reading a favorite author, and particularly her Bible, by moonlight, rather than encroach upon the widow's mite.

Thus she passed many of her summer evenings alone, in prayer, and devotional and intellectual exercises, when she was prostrated with fatigue, and disease was fast hurrying her to the grave. So ardent was her thirst for knowledge, so fervid the devotion of her soul.

CHAPTER IV.

"That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.

DAVID.

BUT I shall always choose to let Mary speak for herself. She wrote a vast deal. She always read with a pen in her hand, and always kept a journal of her life. But unfortunately most of her writings have been destroyed. As fast as they accumulated, she burned them up; and many of those left were seized from the fire by her sister, who came into the room on one occasion when she was consigning them to the flames. She was afraid they would be discovered, and wished to destroy them. Only a few of her letters have been preserved, and most of these were the first sketches, on detached pieces of paper, from which she made out those she sent to her friends. Besides, she was so poor that she could not get such paper as she wished, and most of her manuscripts were written on blank leaves of books, or old scrap and waste paper. It was a matter of

conscience with her never to use writing paper except for her correspondence ; and had it not been for an old account book which belonged to her father, that she found in the garret, with blank leaves, on which most of her writings are preserved, this book never would have been written.

It is a great pity that many of her best writings were destroyed ; some of which, I have been told by those who saw them, and are qualified to judge of their merits, were immensely fine. But those which are preserved would honor the most gifted daughter of Genius.

Her writings must be contemplated through the gloom and privation of her condition. They were not written in the halls of literature, by one in the vigor of health and joyance of youthful spirits, by a mind free from care and elated with the buoyancy of hope and fortune. But by a poor sick girl, who had never mingled with the world—who never saw a female seminary—who never passed a day without pain—who was obliged to toil for her daily bread—who had no advantages which could have atoned for one of these features of privation ; by one who, when compelled to cease from labor, took up her pen —one whose young heart was made desolate by

sorrow and unkindness—by one who found little in this world tolerable but the religion of Jesus Christ.

But all this gloom could not quench the fires of genius. Her intellectual powers were extraordinary and peculiar. Her mind was well balanced, equally distinguished for exquisite judgment and a brilliant fancy. But, luxuriant as this faculty was, it was kept under the perfect control of her judgment, and was the handmaid of her reason.

She had a prodigious tact in regard to the human heart, and all its developments in conduct and manners; a quality which often distinguishes the more gifted individuals of her sex. Her intellect qualified her to relish every department of knowledge. No kind of reading came amiss to her, *if it was valuable!*

Religious biographies were her favorite books. But while her moral edification was promoted by such works as "Fuller's Life of Pearce," her literary ardor prompted her to grasp with keen delight the instruction and amusement of Boswell's Johnson. But her circumstances and condition in life prevented her from reading a *vast deal*, and she was indebted for most of her good thoughts to no one but herself.

After this glance at her condition, the reader is prepared for some of her writings. She wrote a good deal in early life, but nothing can now be found which was written before her 11th year. She was intimate at this time with a little girl of the same age, to whom she addressed the following beautiful letter:

MY DEAR BUT ABSENT J——

How pleasantly will a few moments be passed in writing to a beloved friend,—one who is possessed of health, which of all things renders life desirable; the greatest of blessings, of which I am deprived. But I fear I repine too much at the loss of my health, for I would not wish to complain. When we consider by whose appointment afflictions befall us, we ought silently to submit ourselves to his sovereign pleasure.

He has an undoubted right to do what he will with his own; and to him alone are known the methods by which we may finally be wrought into vessels of honor.

If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, and he condescends to number the hairs of our heads, we may rest assured that he will suffer no calamity to befall us except for the

accomplishment of wise and important purposes. What those particular purposes are, it is vain for us to inquire. But whether it be for our preservation from some formidable evil, or our preparation for some inestimable good, we sincerely wish that his gracious designs may be fully answered.

Afflictions do not spring out of the dust, but are sent upon us, that through these light chastisements we may be made partakers of his holiness.

How frail and uncertain, dear J——, is human life! How beautifully is it compared in the Bible to the flower that groweth up in the morning, and is cut down and withered with the setting sun. Yesterday I gathered a pot of flowers, and it now stands before me. They were fresh and beautiful, but they have already begun to fade, and to-morrow they will die; and such is the fate of man. We should learn all those lessons of wisdom and virtue from such scenes, which they are calculated to inspire.

They present us with a fascinating spectacle; they exhilarate our spirits and charm our sight; they excite our wonder, by the beauty of their form and the delicacy of their texture, the bril-

liancy of their colors and the fragrance of their perfume ; they serve at once to adorn our dwellings and regale our senses. But oh ! their frailty is like their loveliness. How often do we see a youth, in the bloom of health and gaiety, in a few days stretched upon his bed of death. We look again, and see the solemn procession moving on with slow and measured tread, to deposit his form in the dust.

Through the dark valley every one must pass, but the passage admits of a wonderful variety. Some are hurried through it with a rapidity which will not allow them to mark the terrific furniture of the place, so sudden is their departure ; while others are slowly led through it. Multitudes tread this road under the torpor of insensibility, and many rush along it under the turbulence of a raving delirium, without the least chance of a death-bed repentance. Oh ! the danger of putting off preparation for death until we are cast upon a bed of sickness. We have now, dear J——, an opportunity of making our calling and election sure ; and oh ! let us embrace it.

My illness, so far, has been a lingering one ; and I have been favored with time for reflection.

But how suddenly I may be called to God's bar!

With what pleasure should I contemplate the advances of disease upon my frame, if my soul was prepared to fly to the arms of the Redeemer.

You know not, dear J——, what were my feelings when I left your house the other day. I thought then I should never be able to visit you again; it may be true, although the thought is melancholy. Indeed, I had almost forgotten that I was writing to you. You will think I have indulged in a romantic strain; but I trust you will pardon me, as it is perhaps the last letter I may ever write to you. It is with a trembling hand, painful body, and anxious mind, that I write this. I am often obliged to drop my pen, and rest. My health and strength are gradually failing. I can only sit up a short time, and some days I cannot leave my bed at all.

The Doctor attends me constantly, and I have received some benefit from salivation; but you know, Dear, that the consumption is a flattering disease. I have continual pain in my side and breast. *I am very lonely, as there is no one here but mother.*

I received your affectionate epistle, and most sincerely thank you for it. Mine have many imperfections; but receive them as tokens of my affection, and spare the criticism of a cold heart, and answer soon.

And though I sleep beneath the green clods of the valley, may the wave of forgetfulness never sweep from your memory the affection of

MARY.

This letter was written when she was eleven years old, and never intended to be made public. It is a faithful portraiture of her heart, drawn for another as confiding as her own, and is only one of a long series. She is said to have written to her; yet it illustrates the extent of her acquirements, the brilliancy of her mental powers, and the deep but cheerful solemnity that tinged her moral feelings.

It also breathes forth the language of faith and submission to Christ, which would honor more than virgin piety.

The author has drawn a faithful picture of her trials and privations, only the half has not been told, nor can be, until the clods of that valley cover other dust than her own.

Perhaps the query may arise in the mind of some one, how her intellect became so polished, and what influences mingled in the production of so finished a character.

It cannot be attributed to her advantages, for she had none. Lucretia Maria Davidson, who flashed so brilliantly on the literary world, had for a period the richest privileges of genius; and was surrounded with the genial influences of polite literature and the blandishments of a bright social existence. But when the volume of her poems came from the press, Mary saw it, and when she had read it and laid it down, she wept as she said to a friend—"Oh! why is not learning always the birthright of genius?"

It is easy to imagine what Mary would have been in the walls of Mrs. Willard's seminary, and what Lucretia would have been in Mary's valley,

> "devoid of every finer art
> And elegance of life."

But they were both kindred spirits, and are now striking their golden harps to the rich praise of Jesus's love in a better paradise than Eden, beside "the stream of life."

CHAPTER V.

"See'st thou my home?—'Tis where yon woods are waving
In their dark richness to the summer air;
Where yon blue stream a thousand flower-banks laving,
Leads down the hills a vein of light—'tis *there!*"

MRS. HEMANS.

IT now devolves upon me to redeem my pledge of accounting for her superior intellectual advancement and moral culture, deprived, as she was, of the "birthright of genius."

Mary possessed a refined and exquisite taste for natural beauty, and it is probable that the uncommonly sweet prospect which stretched out before her in her first years, may have mingled with the elements that formed her character, and produced in her that enthusiastic love of nature which characterized her through life.

The history of all nations proves that mind receives its peculiar features from neighboring scenes. In turning over the history of the countries of classic fame, we find them diversified with hills and valleys. Such scenery is friendly to the development of genius. Greece, that land

of genius and song, which every scholar loves, which was for centuries the asylum of literature and the home of philosophy, was a land of vales, and mountains, and silver streams. To the modern scholar, the rhetoric of her scenery is more heart-stirring than that of her schools. The cloud-capt brow of Olympus, and the green vale of Tempe, now send a deeper thrill to the classic bosom than the inspired cadence of her bards.

There is a poetry in such scenes which quickens the pulses and sinks deep into the heart. It mingles with the character, and throws its radiance over the moral feelings :

> " Man becomes
> Portion of that around him, where he flees ;
> And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
> Of ocean, or the stars mingles, and not in vain."

If you would find elevation of mind, joyance of feelings, and sublimity of thought, go to the inhabitants of the mountains ; for these bold tracts of nature are the nursery and home of genius. Images of grandeur attract the youthful vision and impress the heart. They invite solitary musing, and beguile the fancy along their summits ; and all the strange and beautiful phe-

nomena of nature awaken the admiration, and nerve and refine the powers.

Where will you go to find the birth-places of the chieftains of philosophy and song? Where for the land of the conqueror and the brave? Where will you look for men who have *never* been conquered, who shall be free as their own mountain wild birds as long as time shall roll?

I cannot forbear a quotation from Mudie, it is so apposite and touching.

"Glance your eye over Asia, and you will find while conquest and change of race have swept the plains of Euphrates and Ganges like floods, Caucasus and Himmalaya have retained their people, and their tuneful cliffs echo the same language as they did in the days of the Patriarchs. The Phœnicians were once great in Northern Africa, and the Egyptians mighty by Nilus's flood. But where now are the ships of Carthage, the palaces of Memphis, or the gates of Thebes? The cormorant sits solitary on those heaps by the Euphrates, where the conqueror of Egypt erected his throne; the Goth, and the Hun trod with mockery over the tombs of the Scipios; and the turbaned Arab has erected his tent over the fallen palaces of Numantia.

But the cliffs of Atlas have retained their inhabitants ; and the same race which dwelt there before Carthage, or Rome, or Babylon, or Memphis had existence, dwell there still."

When any mountain on the globe speaks such language, and genius and love of nature have always distinguished their inhabitants, it is puerile to deny the magic power of such scenery in moulding the character.

Coleridge has described, in pure and graphic verse, the philosophy of the influence of mountain scenes, in his "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouney." He is addressing Mount Blanc :

> "Yet like some sweet beguiling melody,
> So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
> Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,
> Yea, with my life, and life's own secret joy :
> Till the dilating soul, enwrapt, transfused,
> Into the mighty vision passing—there
> As in her natural form, swelled vast to heaven."

God has left the sacred impresses of his divinity on all his works, and there is a sublime force in the declaration of the great Apostle to the Gentiles—"The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." He who

"commandeth the morning, and causeth the day spring to know his place," hath also "declared His glory in the heavens, and in the firmament his handy work." All his works invite our contemplation, and should inspire our praise; we cannot yield to the bland influences of Nature without kindling with her poetry and being made better.

> "To him who in the love of Nature holds
> Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
> A various language; for his gayer hours
> She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
> And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
> Into his darker musings, with a mild
> And healing sympathy, that steals away
> Their sharpness ere he is aware.—
> Go forth under the open sky, and list
> To Nature's teachings, while from all around
> Earth and her waters, and the depths of air,
> Comes a still voice."

The poet has drawn a touching picture of Natural Theology in these lines, and the "still voice" is the echo of the Spirit which reaches the Christian's heart. The Holy Ghost is the constant and unerring teacher of his people; and if they listen to his instructions, they will progress in knowledge and advance in holiness as often as they commune with his works.

He feels, in these wrapt contemplations, that mercy floats on every breeze and flashes from every sunbeam; that it sheds its halo around the domestic circle, and shelters, like a guardian angel, the pillow of his repose; that it flows with the stream and waves with the harvest; that it follows the sun in his pathway, and attends the moon as she climbs the midnight sky; that it makes man happy while he is ill-deserving. For he must be *more* than a monster who can walk forth amidst the beauties and glories of the universe, and not turn to the skies with a consciousness of unmerited delight, and exclaim with devout gratitude,

"My father made them all."

I have dwelt upon this, and intentionally expanded it, for the principle concerned is of vast importance, not only to an analysis of Mary's character, but to a correct understanding of the spirit of her writings. The author could not develope the constituent principles of her character, and show how it was formed, without pointing the reader to her native mountains; for they elevated her genius, refined her tastes, and developed her powers, in connexion with the teachings of the

Holy Ghost, more than all other causes combined.

She often retired from the turbulent associations of her domestic life, and sought the soothing consolations of brighter scenes. She would exclaim to her giddy associates, when they were rambling through the fields, as she stopped to pluck a wild flower or gaze upon the magnificence of the heavens,

> "I see a hand you cannot see;
> I hear a voice you cannot hear."

I have analyzed this feature in her character thus minutely for another reason.

The Christian world too much overlook the works of God, and receive too little instruction and profit from surrounding scenes. It would seem strange that the *Christian* should cherish no love of Nature, when the sense of every line in the book of creation is God. The stupendous and all-perfect works of his hand form an expanded volume, which speaks in lofty characters to the reason and the heart of man, and reflects upon him those impressions of uncontrolable power, and unvarying goodness which the creation has stamped upon every page.

If one solitary vestige of man's primeval gran-

deur has survived the Fall or been restored by the Cross, it is the love for the "awfully vast and elegantly little" in the works of God.

But if a reader glances over these pages who has never felt the bliss of communing with Jehovah through his works, listen, I pray you, to the voice of the Christian's bard:

"Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before.
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thy heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
There liberty, like day,
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy,
A voice is heard, that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud hosanna sent from all Thy works;
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds new raptures to the general praise."

When Mary was shut out from the beaten track of genius, she schooled her mind amid the harmonies and inspirations of Nature. And although it was denied her to drink at the pure well-head of Pagan poesy, yet she was nourished, elevated, and enriched from this flowing fountain — this banqueting table that "Nature spreads for all that lives." Besides, the Bible was

her constant companion from childhood, and she illustrated this truth, which the world are so slow to believe, that God has written not only the best but the most *splendid* book in the world. And, in the absence of almost all literature, she had recourse to the literature of heaven.

We hope the day will soon come when the world will give the revelation of God the same place that He has given it—the foremost in the ranks of all books—the chief corner-stone of literature ; for there is not a doubt that it would do more for the intellect and heart of man than all other works combined if it could once exert its designed and legitimate influence.

After studying her history minutely, I am fully persuaded that all her eminence may be attributed to her originally gifted genius, as it expanded over the pages of Inspiration, and, amid the grand and beautiful scenes of nature, all hallowed by the influences of the eternal spirit.

The reader is now conversant with the history of Mary's younger days. He has contemplated her amidst trying misfortunes, which crowded so thick upon her early life. He has witnessed the expansion of her mind and the refinement of her social feelings, amidst the frosts of an un-

kind fortunes, which would have chilled any other heart and exiled sympathy from the bosom. He has seen the grace of Christ triumph over all these obstacles and these chastisements, employed by God for the accomplishment of the high and holy purposes of mental cultivation and advancement in holiness. He is now ready to follow her along a brighter track, and sympathize with her more brilliant developments.

The religious reader may anticipate a more full portrait of her Christian experience, and it will soon be given. But, first, it is necessary to introduce parts of her writings during her twelfth and thirteenth years, for the sake of marking her successive stages of mind and progress of character. After this we shall come to a new era in her life—when she obtained a hope of heaven, and united with the church of Jesus Christ.

The following letter, written when she was twelve years old, discovers her ardent attachment to her friends, and the estimate she places upon the pleasures of affection. She felt that she needed the supports of friendship, and she sought for it in all her intercourse. She was formed for converse with those who know how to appreciate grace and refinement of soul; and her sacred re-

gard for the trust of generous hearts, gained her many confidants. Her uniform loveliness of deportment and sweetness of conversation, her blandness of manner and beauty of person, all conspired to attract the fancy and win the heart.

This is a beautiful letter, and addressed to the same girl with the one we have already transcribed.

My dear J——

Retired from the busy and trying scenes of the day, how can a few moments be more pleasantly passed by a mind formed for affection, than in communing with a dear though absent friend. Does she ever think of Mary? Do we not sympathize with each other's fortunes? It seems to me that hearts joined together in true affection possess the most perfect enjoyment this world will admit. If so, should we not seize the fleeting bliss of friendship as it passes? Although we cannot see each other, we should be grateful that we have sufficient education to write letters, which I consider one of the richest blessings.

* * * * As we advance in years and understanding, I hope we shall be able to

examine for ourselves the evidences of the Christian religion, that we may be convinced on rational grounds of its divine authority ; for Christianity invites us to examine its claims, and certainly * * * * *

(Lines filled with stars are obliterated.)

* * My dear girl, you tell me you are not well. I know how to sympathize with you, I have so long been deprived of health myself. I have long known you, and my love has increased with my acquaintance, till it constitutes no small share of the happiness of my life.

Converse with *one* we love diffuses a joy through the soul which we cannot expect in a *circle* of friends. Lovely girl ! when I am with you, I can truly say that I am happy ; for the mind never so effectually unburdens itself as in the society of one we love.

How much to be prized is a friend in whom we can always confide ! So much unhappiness is mingled in the lot of all, that it is our duty to spend our time in the attainment of wisdom and the practice of virtue, that we may be prepared to augment the joys of interchange of feeling and reciprocated affection.

It is delightful to do good; and surrounding scenes, like the friendly monitor of the soul, are calculated to inspire us with those reflections respecting the nature of permanent happiness, which will influence us in increasing our own and securing that of others. Thus employed, the hours fly swiftly and pleasantly away. Deprived of affection, life is but a painful journey; and unless that affection is permanent, its loss only wounds the soul.

You have undoubtedly in the circle of your acquaintance seen those who, like the birds of summer, prize each other's presence and music while the sun shines bright; but suddenly desert each other when the ground is whitened by the snows of winter; but may our affection be as *lasting* as it is *dear*. May we also be conscious of the swiftness of the flight of time, and remember that every setting sun brings us nearer to the hour of death.

How many lessons could we learn from the scenes which surround us if we would listen to their voice. How loud do the works of the Creator speak the praises of God! Oh! why are we so insensible? How happy should we be if we would only learn God from the beautiful dis-

plays of his attributes "in the heavens above and the earth beneath." When we are wearied with care and oppressed with sorrow, why do we not forget all our perplexities amid the quiet repose of Nature? We have had sufficient of this life to know that it is a scene of treachery and delusion; yet it is ever assuming the aspect of bliss never to be realized. We chase the phantoms that dazzle our vision till they vanish, and then we weep that we pursued them *so long*. Do we *ever* realize the fancies and hopes of youth? How do our young imaginations pave our future pathway with roses and flowers! We give the world our good wishes, and expect her own. We indulge the dream till the meteor leads us to the precipice, and oh! how often plunges us into ruin.

But, dear J——, you are too sensible, and know too well the value of time, to indulge in fancies or waste your leisure hours. And since virtue is so necessary to our happiness, and so durable are the accomplishments of a refined understanding and amiable temper, let us possess them all. The foolish ornaments of dress are made to catch the unthinking and enthrall the vulgar. But the virtuous and refined mind has charms

which will survive the wreck of every inferior embellishment, and last as long as mind endures.

Farewell, M.

These two are the only remaining letters which can now be found of a long correspondence with the little girl to whom they were addressed. It is a great pity that they have been destroyed; for they are wonderful, touching, and beautiful compositions for a girl of twelve years and wayward fortunes.

CHAPTER VI.

"Sister, sweet sister! let me weep awhile!
Bear with me—give the sudden passion way!
Thoughts of our own lost home—our sunny isle,
Come, as the wind that o'er a reed hath sway,
Till my heart dies with yearnings and sick fears;
Oh! could my life melt from me in these tears!"

MRS. HEMANS.

COMMON misfortunes had bound the children of a once kind, but now deceased father firmly together, and while all loved each other, all cherished towards Mary a peculiar and devoted attachment.

She was considered the flower of the family, and cherished with the deepest affection. Like herself, they supposed her pilgrimage would soon be over; and they used every exertion to render her journey as pleasant, and its termination as tranquil, as possible. They have told me with tears that she never seemed like one of themselves; that she was only a *lent* blessing, which they could enjoy for a few summers, when she would be taken home to her father's house. "We know," they say, "that we

could not see her very long on the earth; and not only her disease rendered her early death certain, but she was so pure and heavenly, that being with her seemed like communion with the beings of a brighter world; and she was so ripe for heaven, that, so far from being astonished at her early departure, we are surprised that she tarried so long."

When brought down very low by a severe attack of disease in her fourteenth year, a kind brother, who loved her ardently, and was absent, thus addresses her. It was the last letter he ever wrote to her, and he has since passed to his reward.

Dearest Sister,

Whom I ever loved with the fondest partiality, how have the times—when in infancy I caressed you, or walked with you in childhood, and gathered you the sweetest flowers that grew on the banks of our own Green River, or in advancing years taught you in my school *when you could come*, while you doubly repaid all my attention by your kind and modest behavior,—oh! how often do these times rise up before me in your absence in grateful remembrance, and linger with me in sweet and cherished thought!

Think then, dear Mary, how like a thunderbolt the news of your long and dangerous illness broke over my mind; to think that you had been in pain and affliction, and even given over by your physician. Oh! 'twas painful indeed to one who will love you tenderly as long as consciousness remains.

But grant, oh! my Father, that my dear sister may yet bloom in health and live to cheer us; if not, prepare her for a smooth and easy passage to the home of thy people; and if she is taken away thus early in life, may she consider *that* Providence best, for she is taken away from the evil to come, in a life where every day she lives will only add to the number and weight of her sorrows.

* * * * *

These extracts are given for the purpose of showing how deep was the affection her brother cherished for her. The same affection burned in the hearts of her sisters. She was obliged to be separated from them most of the time, for they were ordinarily employed in the town in domestic labor. Mary, whose lot it was to be the youngest of the family and the servant of her mother, often stole an hour from the fatigues and hardships to which

she was subjected, to write letters to her sisters. She flew to solitude to commune with those she loved. This letter below was written about this time to one of them.

Dear Sister,

I cannot find words to express my feelings. Oh that I could see you, and converse with you. Dear Huldah, how doubly dear have your society and friendship been to me when I have enjoyed them after such a separation; so dear, that nothing short of death can erase from my memory the sweets of our former intercourse. As correspondence with you affords me the chiefest delight in your absence, while it fastens in my mind those principles you have inculcated, I cannot forbear to spend a few leisure moments in writing to you this evening. Oh Huldah! when friends live together, they do not realize the pangs of separation. But could I once more have the society of my sisters, I think I should prize it higher than ever. How thankful should I be that they can write to me. But I am ungrateful; sin prevails in my soul, and shuts out the concerns of religion when an attention to them is of such vital importance to my own future interests.

All seek for happiness, but holiness only can produce it in our temporal or eternal state. When adversity assails us, and our prospects are clouded with gloom, what can cheer the heart and support the soul but religion? It should be balm to the wounded spirit; it should elevate us above the frowns and flatteries of the world, and arm us with courage and fortitude. Then let us, dear H——, forget our doubts and fears, and place our whole reliance on God for support. Let us cling to him as the rock of our salvation; and through all the adversities of life, however grievous and afflictive they may be, take up our cross and follow our crucified Redeemer; remembering, at last, we shall receive our reward, where sorrows are unknown and joys are eternal.

Born as we are into a world of sin, we are under a thousand temptations to swerve from the path of duty. All men have been more or less entangled in its snares. Religion alone can effectually preserve us from the toils of the adversary. Subject to virtue and Gospel law, we shall fear no evil. Sickness, every kind of disappointment, and even death itself, will be welcome; for we can meet them all with serenity of spirit. But religion not only illumines the darkness of misfor-

tune, but mingles its own radiance with the smiles of prosperity. With a good conscience, man is in almost a paradise in this world, though he be a sinner.

Observe the votaries of pleasure, and the lives they lead. Behold a youth in the prime of life, blessed with talents and the means of early education, who abandons himself to the indulgence of his passions, and consider the wretched termination of his course. Feeble and emaciated, bereft of fortune and friends, he dies, an object of pity, and a striking example of the horrible end of the sinner.

These principles have a broader application, "Virtue exalteth a nation." No association of men can prosper who deny God and his word, and more especially no popular government like our own can long be maintained in prosperity without the aid of divine wisdom and integrity, and a hearty and uniform support on the part of the people of the religion of the Redeemer. I tremble for that country which is ruled by men who love not the Lord Jesus Christ. "Oh that men would fear the Lord."

But let our solicitudes be confined chiefly to ourselves, until we have learned to tread in the paths of obedience and holiness. Sister, consi-

der that *our* end approaches. Death must soon overtake us, and close our career; we must stand before Omniscience each for herself.

Oh! that will be a trying crisis to all guilty men. Then it will be known who have served the Lord and who have opposed him. Then shall the righteous be separated from the wicked, and the final sentence pronounced upon the ungodly; they shall be banished to hell. Agonizing thought! How can we bear to think, dear sister, that we may be numbered among them? the idea is insupportable.

But let us turn our thoughts to those who have served their God *here*, and shall stand on His right hand *there*. O, happy consideration! They shall be made kings and priests unto God, and enter the palace of immortality, prepared for them from the foundation of the world. *We* can be admitted to their ranks if we will only follow in their footsteps. How, oh! how can we be so insensible to these stupendous scenes, when we consider how mean and transitory are the things of this life? This is not the abode of happiness; it dwells above, and most of our joys are but preludes of misery, save the bliss of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are *immortal* beings, and our interests lie *beyond* the tomb. We were created for the pleasure of God, and placed in this vestibule of being to prepare for His service in higher spheres. Of what vast consequence that we walk in the paths of virtue and religion.

But I ought not to weary your patience, and I will close this protracted epistle. Mr. W—— (her pastor) and C. G * * * * * called here to-day. I had long wished to see my pastor; but he came in so unexpectedly, that I was much agitated, and did not converse with him as I wanted to. I could not compose myself enough to tell him my feelings. I am little used to such scenes, but I trust I shall behave myself better the next time. He promised to call again soon, and before he left he prayed with us, and I hope his prayer was answered. Dear H——, I have freely unbosomed my soul to you, but I know no one but yourself will ever see this rude letter. * *

YOUR OWN MARY.

There is, in all her productions, an air of simplicity, which is delightful. She was a child of Nature, and the softness and repose of her writings mirror forth the blandness of her feelings.

She could not write without impressing her very soul upon the page, so artless and unstudied was every intellectual movement; her pen was, in all cases, the agent of her heart. She was always distinguished for original thought, and her mind was from early childhood constantly dwelling upon moral themes. She could not write or converse long without bordering upon the solemnities of revealed truth, and she seems to have been always familiar with eternal realities. She could not allude to the guilt of *others* without coming home to scrutinize the secrets of her *own bosom.*

Although her disposition was remarkably amiable, and her talents of the finest order, her heart, alive to the noblest emotions of sympathy and benevolence, her mental powers and moral feelings highly cultivated; and although grace had poured its transforming influences over her spirit, elevating, softening, and refreshing with life, verdure, and holiness her whole person; yet she cherished so deep a penitence, and such abasing views of herself, that she did not entertain any hope of salvation.

She exhibited all the Christian graces except hope. But the promise was laid up for her

in store: "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord."

She was yet to emerge from this eclipse with no common splendor.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on eagles' wings; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

CHAPTER VII.

" Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."
CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

IT is the author's design to draw a faithful picture of Mary's life, and the reader's attention is kindly solicited to this chapter, which will describe her feelings for a year or two previous to her obtaining a hope.

Her mind was long clouded with the most distressing doubts, and she frequently passed through seasons of fasting, penitence, and prayer, which have often reminded me of the horrid gloom which settled upon the soul of the pious Cowper. But they were not characterized by such awful elements of thick darkness and despair as that cloud which settled like the mantle of night over his broken spirit. For he has said of himself, with graphic power,

" I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infixed
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades."

They were rather seasons of deep heart-searching and self-scrutiny, which every Christian who makes unusual attainments in grace often experiences. They are the necessary exercises of the mind when it pierces the recesses of the soul by the light and guidance of eternal truth. They are truly *philosophical*, as much so as the tears Newton shed when he learned his own insignificance from the grandeur of the heavens. How many tears are shed by the child of God in his closet, and how often does the cloud of sadness rest upon his brow amid the walks of life, from doubt and uncertainty respecting his spiritual state! How protracted is the struggle through which he must pass; how many days and nights he must consume in watchfulness and devotion before he gains that bold eminence in the straight and narrow way which leads to his Father's house, where, with unclouded vision and enraptured soul, he casts his eye beyond the blue-waved Jordan,

> "To Canaan's fair and happy land,
> Where his possessions lie."

These mounts of vision greet the footsteps of the Christian only at long intervals, and between

them lie the dark and dreary deserts, where "no water is."

As the infinite purity of God's moral character flashes in upon the solitude of his bosom, the first language of his soul is, "how can I appear before the Almighty, for I am a man of impure lips?" And his bursting heart can only send forth this petition to the skies, "God be merciful to me a sinner." These are the moments when the grace of humility is in its most lovely and vigorous exercise.

Humility is a gracious exercise of the mind towards God, in making a correct estimate of ourselves. It is thinking God's thoughts of us. If any one reads this work who would like to pass over this chapter in Mary's history, let him pause a moment, and ask himself if he thinks it desirable for an immortal being to be deceived. Is it not better to discover that we are infected with leprosy, and apply to the Great Physician in this world, than to pass on, covered with pollution, to the judgment, where "the balm of Gilead" will not avail him if he be unclothed with the righteousness of the saints? Humility is an *active* exercise. "Humble yourselves in the sight of God," is Jehovah's command. But in Christ's

kingdom we are entirely *passive* in *exaltation;* for those that humble themselves shall be lifted up.

This estimate contemplates two distinct aspects of our being—the physical and moral. Many have deceived themselves and others by an humble estimate of their physical powers. The astronomer, while piercing the home of other systems, casts himself into the dust, and while wonder fills his soul, physical humility pervades his bosom. But all the universe he sees is only the outer court of God's temple, of which the earth is an atom, and man an atom of an atom world. No wonder that he thinks himself a worm of the dust. Yet he is too proud to bow his will to the mighty architect of those wheeling systems, neither will he worship at the Cross, that mystery, more stupendous than all, or acknowledge himself a poor hell-deserving sinner, with all his physical abasement. Mrs. Barbauld has fascinated the world with her philosophical pictures of man in his contrast with mightier objects, and embellished them with the bewitching melody of song; but some of her best estimates are only physical, and she no where pros-

trates man under the shadow of the cross of his Redeemer.

La Place, the great French astronomer, has left on record some of the sublimest bursts of feeling of the same kind. But when Job exclaimed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," he reached a higher standard of moral excellence than La Place ever thought of.

I well remember a remark which fell from the lips of an eminent divine of our country a few years since. Said he, "I have read with more pleasure the picture of Payson's heart, written in his closet, than the wrapt and almost inspired measures of Mrs. Barbauld."

Perhaps his eye may glance over the precious fragments of Mary's Journal, if this little work should wander to the scene of his ministry on the heights of Brooklyn.

I have mentioned that she habitually kept a diary; but unfortunately she *destroyed* it all, except the following vestiges which have survived the ruin. Their present existence may be attributed to the fact that they were sketched on the blank sides of a few stray leaves of an old account book, and probably escaped her notice. They are given as perfectly as they could be deciphered.

They were written when she was only fourteen years old.

"I am tired of thinking, and I will commit my thoughts to paper; perhaps it will be for my improvement, and help me to understand my own heart. I long to know it, but no tongue can describe its hardness and pollution."

"Oh! Gracious God, I, a poor, ignorant, sinful child, beseech Thee to humble my proud, stubborn heart. Wilt thou give me, Lord, deep *penitence?* Teach me, oh! thou Blessed and Eternal Spirit, *in what manner* to cast myself at the feet of Christ in humility and sack-cloth."

"If God's grace assist me, I *will* earnestly seek the sanctification of the Spirit and the mercy of the Redeemer *forever;* but I know I cannot do any thing without *divine assistance.* Oh! I hope that, in making an effort to perform my duty, while I exert every power of my being, I shall not forget, that if I triumph, Jesus Christ alone will have achieved the victory." * * * * * "Oh that Christians would pray for me; but if they knew my hardness of heart, they would have no faith. Inspire them, O Lord, by thy Spirit. Can they not raise a prayer

to heaven, if it would save a soul from hell? I believe they can read my guilt in my countenance. * * * I deserve no mercy. It would be no more than just if I were this hour cast into hell. I desire, Father, to thank thee that thou hast so long preserved me from so just a punishment; and canst thou *now* accept my heart? I know I am too vile for infinite goodness to love; but thou, oh Blessed Saviour, art *able*, and thou *alone*, to sanctify my sinful heart."

"I think I am willing to know my own heart; and if I know any thing of it, I am willing to receive Christ as my Prophet, Priest, and King. But my heart is a mass of deceit. I cannot but wonder that Christ should be willing to receive such a vile wretch as I am, and I find it one of the hardest things in the world to believe that he *ever will*. I fear I am not willing, after all, to come to the right spot; but I am sure I desire to. Never did I wish for any thing *more*—nay, not *half*, not *a quarter*—so much as I desire to become a servant of the Lord Almighty. Oh! for grace to subdue this stubbornness; oh for light to dispel this darkness, that broods over my captive spirit; oh for Infinite Power to create me anew in Christ Jesus." * * * * *

* * "Wilt thou, Oh Lord! look down in pity, and behold a guilty child prostrate at thy feet, humbly imploring thee, out of thine infinite mercy, to subdue this *impenitence* and *unwillingness* of soul? The Holy Ghost calls me, and how can I longer resist his kind and tender influences? It seems that I am almost insensible; but surely I am not as I *formerly* was, for when I laid down at night I could sleep *without tears*. Satan so blinded me, that I could not see the pollution of my heart. But now, when I retire to rest sleep flies from my pillow; and let it not return till my heart is broken at the feet of the lowly and lovely Redeemer."

"I desire neither to talk, work, nor sleep; and it sends a chill over me when I see any one coming. I wish to be *alone*, where no eye but God can see me, and no ear but his, hear me. Conversation on *worldly things* destroys my peace, deadens my sensibilities, and draws my heart away from God. I feel no taste for any thing, but that solitude which is consecrated by communion with Christ. The world has lost its charms on my spirit, and I no longer * * * * * * Written for no eye but my own, for they are the thoughts of a deceitful heart."

Oh! how like the deep breathings of Payson's soul, when the waves and billows had all gone over him, are these precious thoughts from Mary's Journal.

She opens another page with an ardent desire for some Christian friend to visit her when confined to her mother's house. She says:

"Oh for some kind friend, to whom I can pour out my soul! Why do not Christians come and see me more frequently? I surely *need* their prayers and counsel, I need their encouragement and instructions, to urge me on to repentance and faith. If they are journeying to heaven, why will they not help me along the road to that blessed world? Why does not my pastor visit me *again*? No one in the whole congregation so much needs his kind and encouraging aids as myself. Oh God! send him to me *now, if thou canst,* for I am in the deep waters; I am in a dry and thirsty wilderness, and shall faint without the water of life. Oh blessed Saviour, wilt thou guide his footsteps to this humble and neglected dwelling. But if no one comes, I will fly to Christ, for he will not turn."

It appears that she was heard by her Redeemer, and interrupted at this moment by a call from her

pastor. It is, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary illustrations of the power of the prayer of faith to prevail with Israel's God which ever happened. After his departure, she flew to her chamber, and thus continues her notes.

"God of mercy, infinite, unbounded mercy, I beseech thee to give me a thankful heart that thou hast sent such a messenger as my beloved pastor to visit me, and cheer my spirit, when I deserve nothing but hell flames. O! how canst thou hear prayer *at all*—especially *mine?* O wonderous, infinite, unbounded love! Oh, how can our kind minister enter so deeply into the feelings of others, and point out so clearly the path to heaven; how can he have so much taste, and affection, and sympathy, even for *me;* and, above all, how can he love so much the cause of Christ, when he is blind? Oh, Father, thou hast more than made it up to him.

"I desire to thank thee that thou hast not yet cast me off from mercy's arms; and oh, since thou hast spared me so long, purify and wash me from all my vileness. Blot my sins from thy holy book. Reform, subdue, and humble my stubborn spirit, and chasten it for the skies. Remove from me *pride*, that loath-

some, *most* loathsome of all sins, for I cannot endure it in *myself;* much less can God contemplate me with any regard or patience. * * Oh Lord, subdue this unwillingness to sink down into the dust at the foot of the cross. Enable me by thy good spirit to trust in Christ *alone* for pardon and sanctification of soul, and delight in his service. *Why am I so vile?* I think I would not for any thing serve any other master, or in any way gratify myself, except in doing good and being obedient to his will; and I can't see that *this* is wrong.

"Help me, Father, to look to Thee for grace to follow Christ. I do not wish to follow him as did Peter, 'afar off,' for I had rather be dishonored than dishonor God. I had rather *die* than wound the cause of *the* Saviour. Oh, is he *my* Saviour? But I am vile, and let me not deceive myself. Let no false hope find covert in my heart. * * * * * I, who have slighted the calls of mercy so long, will God *now* have compassion on me? Oh, will he, will he not cast me off *forever?* The thought rends my heart with anguish; but oh, how *just* it would be! I sometimes think I could admire the very *justice* that dashed me

to hell! but still I cannot endure the thought of being banished from heaven, and cursing my God while the tide of ages rolls on. Oh no! no! If I am lost, 'I will praise my God while I have any being.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God."
DAVID.

IT is delightful and encouraging to the Christian reader to find his way into the heart of penitence and devotion; and a few more extracts from Mary's Journal may be greeted with pleasure.

"O my God, my soul is cast down within me, and I am covered with the billows; but thou hast said, 'He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out;' and oh, why cannot I trust thy promises? why not trust thy grace? O Lord! teach me *how* to cast myself at the feet of Christ; for there is a *right* way, and I cannot find it *alone*. I will do what I *can;* and whether I am redeemed or lost, I will pray without ceasing, night and day. I will cry to the Lord to be merciful to me a sinner. I will try to learn my duty from the Bible; but then all these exercises only fasten the

thought still deeper in my bosom, that I deserve to be cast off. *Where* shall I seek for peace? for oh! I cannot endure this harassing of a guilty conscience. I will seek no peace, *any where*, until I have by the blood of Christ made my peace with God.

"Alas! I am not the daysman: Jesus the Redeemer alone can say 'peace, be still;' I *deserve* no peace of mind, and surely I *desire* none but that which arises from a consciousness that I am reconciled with my father. * * * * * * * * I had rather have all this sting of conscience, than to relapse again into stupidity and indifference. Oh! I would not for worlds. I could weep tears of blood, if they could wash my guilt away. But nothing but the blood of Christ,

> 'Gushing from that flowing fountain,
> Can wash my guilt away.'

"Oh! give me faith to believe that thou wilt. Array the promises of the Bible before thy vision, oh my soul. Luke xviii. 7-8: xxii. 44. 'And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.' This is a pattern for me." * * * * * *

* * * * "If I had died yesterday, where should I have been to-day? My mind is filled with agonizing reflections. * * *
But contemplate the promises:—'Whatsoever things ye ask in prayer, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' O, give me faith to believe that my poor prayers will be heard; teach my proud heart *which* is the *right* way to ask * * * * * *
I will ask some pious friend around me to point out to me *exactly in what way* to seek Christ; but oh, the sinful state of my *neighborhood!* I have no pious friend around me to go to. How my heart expands with love to God's people! But again, in this emergency let me flee to the Bible. Look at the Prodigal Son—I have read it, and it is delightful. Oh, how kind and benevolent is the Saviour. In the two former parables Christ had shown how much pains he takes to reform sinners. He represents himself as a shepherd wandering over hill and dale to find a lost lamb, which had left the fold, and strayed upon the cold and barren mountains. So he has followed me; and oh! how should I respond to these kind feelings of the Saviour. Like the Prodigal, I have been unwilling to enjoy my com-

mon share of blessings in my heavenly Father's house; and as this youth laid claim to his father's property, and spent it in self-gratification, so have I instituted my claims, and seized God's blessings, and perverted them to self-indulgence, and gone away from God, where the counsels and reproofs of a father would not fall on my ear, or the voice of his tender admonitions be heard.

"He has not given me *riches*, but by labor I can get my *daily bread;* and oh, how ungrateful have I been for *this*. He has not given me *health*, but I have *life;* and my mind can rove free, and ought to be sanctified to his service. He has not given me *learning*, but I can *read his word;* and oh! how many millions have never heard even the name of a Bible or a Saviour. I have perverted all these blessings, and now the famine has come—the famine of the soul; and oh, what on earth so dreadful! Pride has urged me farther and farther from God every day. Often the spirit has followed me, and I have heard his voice. Ah, I remember how kind God has been to me, and *I think I am sorry;* and oh, I *can* and I *will* return. But will He receive me? Ah! wicked unbelief! I *know* he

will. The Prodigal Son was willing to look his condition in the face: he saw that he was ready to die, but he had abused his father so long, that he did not know that he would receive him and pardon him if he went back. But *duty* called him, his *father* called, and *right* called louder than all. Now see him balancing! At last he comes to the point when his destiny was changed, 'I will arise, and go to my father.'

"He starts. See him leave his mean employment; care-worn, ragged, and with downcast looks he approaches his old home. See his father, that old man, leaning on his staff and trembling with age, going out of his gate to meet him 'while yet a great way off.' They meet; they embrace; and the father kisses his ragged, wicked, but penitent son. *Now, what lesson did Christ intend to teach by this parable?* Did he not mean to say, if I would go home to him, as this penitent did to *his* father's, that he would receive me to his arms? Surely this must be the meaning of it; and now, shame on my unbelief! I *will* go; for

'I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;
But if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die.'

I have wandered far enough ; and now, oh my Father ! receive me, unworthy as I am, to thy service, and give me but the lowest place, and I will be faithful and trust thy grace."

Thus passed off for ever the cloud from her spirit, and light burst into her soul, which, like the dawn, shone brighter unto perfect day. She flew to her Saviour, and found a safe and quiet covert underneath the shadow of his everlasting wings. Much search has been made, but these are the only scraps of a long, rich journal, which can now be found. They are enough to discover her character, and are a true portrait of her heart. No human being has the power of drawing so faithful a picture of her spiritual feelings as she has here drawn of herself. They place her penitence and faith in a brilliant light. They are the struggles of a soul just bursting into the freedom of the children of God. And,

> " As the morning steals upon the night,
> Melting the darkness,"

so the light of the Sun of Righteousness illumined this mourner's bosom. Humility is always the precursor of exaltation, as the darkness

of night precedes the dawn, and it is commonly the darkest just before day.

These struggles of the soul are shadowed forth in the poetry of the Bible, by the effort of the first wandering sun-beam which emerges from the gloom of night and heralds the approach of day. The waves are always agitated as Christ speaks "peace."

"There's husbandry in heaven;"

And the economy of divine grace never appears with more attractive lights than at such seasons. The soul that has been bathed in sorrow, and plunged into the horrors of spiritual darkness, is well prepared to prize the grace of deliverance. I have observed, in reading the lives of the most eminent saints on earth, that most of them were baptized with the waves of sorrow before they drank the waters of Siloam.

As the children of Jacob, who had passed their days in traversing the sterile wastes of that terrific desert, sung a louder anthem of thanksgiving to the God of their salvation, when he divided the waters and they passed over the bed of the Jordan. What a burst of joy went up to heaven from that mighty host as they took possession of

the Promised Land! Kindred to this, and perhaps more rapturous, is the song of a new-born soul. For who that can look back to that sun-gilt eminence in his journey, the hour of his first love, will not *forever* exclaim,

"When God revealed his gracious name,
And changed my mournful state,
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,
The grace appeared so great.

"The world beheld the glorious change,
And did Thy hand confess;
My tongue broke out in unknown strains,
And sung surprising grace."

The subject of this memoir often passed through the deep waters, and afflictions buffeted her soul. But "he who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" nerved her spirit under them all with the energies of the Holy Ghost. But God was preparing her for signal demonstrations of his love and favor. She was soon to emerge at once, and forever, from that dreary abode which is enlivened by no refreshing views of Jesus and of heaven.

In the spring of 1827, when she was in her sixteenth year, the Lord poured out his Spirit mightily upon the congregation and church of Austerlitz, and she participated largely in the blessings of

the revival. After passing through a season of peculiarly deep self-abhorrence and humility, early in this revival she became well established in the consolations of Christian hope. She seems after this to have been very little troubled with doubts about her eternal salvation, and she not unfrequently passed weeks and months of great triumph. I have been told by a sister, that her Journal, during this "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," was a rich chapter in Christian experience, and full of interest; simple, chaste, and triumphant in its strain; and abounding in high and luminous views of the great redemption. But we must have recourse to her letters to ascertain her feelings at this time. Perhaps it may be well to mention one fact of interest, which is yet vivid in the memory of surviving affection. She was at this time living with a pious family in the valley. While in this state of darkness, before the light of religious hope dawned upon her path, she was one day observed in a pensive attitude, standing by the door of the family apartment with a pencil in her hand, writing on the ceiling these touching and beautiful lines as descriptive of her feelings:

"Oh that my load of sin were gone,
Oh that I could at last submit
At Jesus' feet to lay me down,
To lay myself at Jesus' feet."

They are still preserved as an affecting "memorial of her." We will make a short extract from one of her letters written at this time, to show her state of mind. The same humble strain of self-abasement before God is visible, while she speaks with increased confidence of her hope in her correspondence after this period.

Sabbath Eve. 24th June, 1827.

DEAREST J——

We have, through infinite mercy, been brought to another sabbath. * * * Could we realize what we are and whither bound, I am sure we could not be stupid. Eternity would engross our thoughts and conversation. But alas! we can sleep while nearing the hour of our departure. We are standing on the beach of eternity's ocean, and can we play with toys while its waves are dashing around our feet? The human race will toil to accumulate a mass of shining dust; oh, can we not be as diligent in laying up our treasures "where moth cannot corrupt, or thieves break through and steal?" * *

We are encompassed with afflictions; but will they not discipline our hearts for the skies, and thus "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?"

Let us, dear sister, live as pilgrims here, whose inheritance is laid up in a brighter world. We have no earthly father to watch over us, but how sweet and consoling is the reflection that we have a father in the skies death cannot rob us of. I often think of redeeming love; but my tongue is mute when I attempt to speak its praises. O the grace of Christ! Death, which once had no charms for me, I now regard as a friend. I love to think of it, for it will only be a kind messenger to take me to Jesus' arms. I should not be willing to think of living here a great while, unless I thought I should live to the glory of God. I may yet be deceiving myself, for if I am really a Christian, why am I so full of sin. Oh! what reason I have for deep humility before God on account of remaining sins, which are still lurking in my bosom. But let us not, dear Julia, be discouraged in our efforts to attain holiness, although we are exceedingly sinful; for we have a Spirit to sanctify, and an advocate to

plead. He knows all our infirmities, and he remembers "our frame that it is dust."

But the shades of evening are gathering around me, and I must hasten to a close.

Good-by, Dear J——,

Your own Mary.

CHAPTER IX.

"She sings by her wheel, at that low cottage door—
While the long evening shadow is stretching before;
With a music as sweet as the music which seems
Breathed softly and faint in the ear of our dreams."

WHITTIER'S YANKEE GIRL.

ONE trying misfortune of Mary's life we have failed to notice.

On the decease of her father, the whole family were thrown upon their own resources for a support. Mary, with her other sisters, was compelled to spend most of her time in the families of the place as "an hired girl." They were all well able to endure the hardships of such a life but herself. But it is painful to think that she was urged to such a life by the tyranny of necessity for several reasons.

Her *constitutional weakness* unfitted her for hard labor, and by being subjected to it, she suffered a vast deal of *pain* and *distress;* but she was a silent and uncomplaining sufferer. Besides this, she could not have much time left for

literary and *social improvement.* She says in one of her letters, that her trial of feeling on this account was acute and distressing. But her hardships *hastened her death:* and there is perhaps no spectacle more eloquent in appeal to the sympathy of a cultivated mind than such misfortune clouding "young genius brightening into day," for she was gifted, and would have adorned any sphere.

Indigence necessarily followed in the train of such circumstances, but it was attended by an economy which alleviated some of its more distressing features. She says, in a letter to her sister, who was absent:

"Our postage costs us a great deal; but rather than give up our correspondence, let us *work the harder*, and be more economical in our expenditures, and we can better *afford it.*"

Often has she had recourse to this expedient to provide herself with money to pay the postage of a letter from a friend when she heard one was lying for her in the village post-office. Of course her letters would frequently remain in the office some days before she could take them out. For she had too much *delicacy* to ask for a letter the postage of which she could not pay, and she had

too much *principle* to run into debt. I find that at the time of this revival mentioned in the last chapter, she was engaged in spinning in the family of one of the members of Mr. W.'s church.

She began to go out to labor when she was about fourteen years old, and continued the practice, till, in the kind providence of God, a worthy young gentleman of the place had the good fortune and good sense to provide her a home of her own.

Perhaps some one who reads this work may think less of Mary on account of her fortunes, and consider her occupations as humiliating; but the author entertains different views on this subject. It is true she would have graced a more elevated sphere; but her pinions being clipped by the arrows of misfortune, all will concede that her virtues are more illustrious for the contrast they sustain with her fortunes. She formed her tastes, and courted enjoyments, in the secluded vale of life, where she pursued "the noiseless tenor of her way."

She loved the simplicity of humble life, and her answer to a gentleman of eminence in the literary world when he found her at the wheel, is truly characteristic of her taste and feelings.

"I suppose, sir, you do not sympathize with my tastes, for you have moved in higher walks of life. But I think, sir, I love the music of this wheel better than you do the plaudits of the multitude, and rejoice more in my humble life than you do in your path of fame."

CHAPTER X.

"I love her gates, I love the road:
The church adorned with grace,
Stands like a palace built for God,
To show his milder face."

In her sixteenth year Mary united with the Church of Christ in her native valley. She had long been a member of the Invisible Zion, and as long maintained the conversation of a Christian; and none who knew her doubted her piety. But up to this period she did not consider it her duty to enrol her name on the church records.

The only traces of her feelings which this solemn occasion inspired, that can now be found, are preserved in a letter she wrote soon after to her sister.

She says:—

"I have rejoiced to hear, dear Sister, that you can find enjoyment in something more elevated and permanent than the vain amusements of this fleeting world. They cannot satisfy its thirst if they enthral the immortal spirit. ——

and myself are now members of this church. I hope you will not think I have acted rashly. I have seriously reflected on the course I have taken, and tried to realize the solemnity of my engagements. In *publicly* entering into covenant with God, I trust I only *confirmed* what I had before done in my closet. It was a solemn scene, and will be remembered for my joy or condemnation when "time shall be no longer."

I trembled at the time, for fear I was not coming with a right heart to so momentous a work; but I trust I am not deceived, and rejoice that I have united with this branch of the vine, for I believe it is planted with the right hand of Omnipotence.

Since this event I have enjoyed myself more than *ever* before, and I should be *very* happy, were it not for my sinful heart. I fear my conduct will not correspond with the profession I have made, but I will cling to "the Rock that is higher than I."

I will also make some other extracts from this letter, although they have no direct bearing upon this subject, which we now pass over. She appears to have spent her leisure time for each

successive day for two weeks in writing this epistle, so constantly was she confined by her domestic engagement. She flew to her chamber after finishing her daily task, to commune with an absent and beloved sister.

"Thursday. Since I finished spinning, I have been ironing, and I feel very tired. I am now at Mr. Walling's, and have been here about three weeks. The rain has fallen in torrents to-day, and I have felt rather lonely here in the garret, and have often thought of you."

"Friday Evening. There is the most beautiful bow on the cloud I ever saw. How sweet a sunset! The hand of God spread these heavens and painted that bow. I can see his hand in every thing around me; in the gentle rain-drops that have cooled the fevered air. But I am weary, and must bid you good-night."

"Saturday. I have a little leisure this afternoon, and I will spend it in writing to Julia. Yesterday I visited at ———. He and his wife were of the number who joined the church with me. In the evening I went to the Bible class, which was held at Mr. Woodbridge's house. Our lesson was in the 18th of Luke—the parable of the importunate widow and the august judge;

enforcing the duty and illustrating the efficacy of prayer. Our pastor, you know, excels on such occasions, and he explained it fully, and opened in the most striking manner the scope of the parable. There were many young people present, mostly young ladies; and none of us went away, I think, without resolving to be more diligent and fervent at the throne of grace.

"I love Bible classes, they are so rich in instruction and so inspiring to virtue. I cannot be sufficiently thankful that we have them so often and enjoy them so well.

"Our independence was celebrated in this town in a most delightful manner. Four sabbath schools met at Spencertown, and listened to an address in the morning at the Academy. At noon we adjourned to receive refreshments, and assembled in the afternoon in the church, where the Rev. Mr. Osborn delivered a discourse well adapted to the occasion. About 250 scholars and their teachers were present. After the services, each one received a religious tract.

"How welcome is Saturday evening! how many interesting and delightful associations cluster around the vestibule of holy time. Another sabbath is approaching, and again I shall enjoy its

rich privileges. Oh! how grateful should I be for such signal blessings."

* * "Sabbath Evening. I have been to church to-day, and this morning we had a most excellent sermon from Isa. l. 10. 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.'

"Mr. W—— thought our evidences of piety should not be measured by our joy; that one might be truly pious and walk in darkness; that one might easily be deceived in regard to the cause of his happiness; that a deceived person might apply these precious promises to himself, who had no true love to God in his bosom. * * But it is late, and where is Julia? Before this, she has retired, and is locked in the arms of slumber. Do frightful visions disturb her repose? Oh! thou who never sleepest, watch over my absent, my beloved sister; protect her from all danger; support her in all her afflictions of body and mind, and make her perfectly submissive to thy will. Let not the world steal her affections from the cross. Oh! let her choose that

good part which shall never be taken from her. To thy mercy, oh thou orphan's God, I commend her. Good-night, Julia."

"Tuesday Afternoon. I have been washing, and am very tired. House-work is too hard for me, and I would not do it except to oblige Mrs. Walling."

"Wednesday. I have once more taken up my pen, after the labors of the day are over, to write a word to Julia. I believe Mr. W.'s people think I go to bed very early; but I have been watching those little *sparklers* in yonder heaven. The moon looks calm and beautiful as she sails through the deep blue sky, and I wonder if Julia watches her too, and thinks of her sister

"MARY."

"Thursday Evening. Another day has passed, and a day of *probation* too. A day is a considerable portion of our life, and all 'our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.' Oh! Julia, how much have we to excite us to husband our time with the greatest frugality. Since I began to write, I have heard the awful intelligence that another human being has just dropped into eternity in a frightful manner. Mr. L. L—— last

night laid down in a barn on fresh hay, and was found dead this morning. He laid down in health and thoughtlessness, and woke in eternity. Oh! let *us* be ready.

"YOUR OWN SISTER MARY."

None of her productions for the year 1828 are preserved, except a short letter addressed to the same sister with the last epistle. She says—

"I have been thinking what my life is worth. Wherein am I useful to society? Of what advantage am I to my friends; or what am I doing for the cause I have espoused? Ah! me: my life is nothing but vanity. Day after day, and week after week passes by, never to be recalled; and yet I am the same sinful being, vile in my own eyes; and oh, how much more so in the sight of Infinite Holiness! I have wandered far from the straight and narrow path of self-denial I engaged to tread. Turn me, oh my Father! lest I wound thy cause and ruin my soul; heal my backslidings, and blot out my iniquities from thy book. Oh that I could live *entirely* devoted to God, and exert all my energies, and consecrate all my acquisitions, to the honor of God and the happiness of my species. Oh Julia! let us serve him who is alon

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worthy of our devotion, and whose Spirit alone can inspire our praises. Let us honestly ask ourselves if this world does not usurp the throne of our affections." * * * * *

We are now compelled to pass over a year in her history, which was fraught with interest, because we have none of her writings during the period.

In the absence of writings we cannot have recourse to incidents in her history, for she trod an obscure path. Her biography must be a moral and intellectual sketch; a history of genius throwing off the incumbrances of misfortune, and breaking forth in light and verdure amidst surrounding sterility. It must be a story of the *heart.*

CHAPTER XI.

"They go on from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth in Zion."

"While I mused, the fire burned."

DAVID.

AFTER her union with the church, her astonishing growth in grace was observed by all who knew her. She spent much time in solitary devotion and religious engagements; and it is an old maxim of Christianity, that solitude is favorable to devotion, while action is friendly to benevolence of character. The truth of this her experience fully illustrated. The person who retires often from the world must have time for reflection, and in the shades of solitude he will analyse his feelings, and establish his principles of action, guided by his high communings with a brighter sphere. His intercourse with heaven will be more pure and spiritual, his penitence more deep and his faith more vigorous.

Such a Christian is conscious of possessing within himself resources of happiness, which lie

beyond the reach of earthly alloy or invasion. He cannot stoop to laugh away his probation in the frivolous amusements of pleasure, or lavish his affections upon objects of human ambition.

Solitude is also the nurse of enthusiasm, and "enthusiasm is the parent of genius." There is society in the deepest solitude, and society which combines the highest and noblest elements. These facts indicate to us the kindness of Providence in placing on a level in this important respect the rich and the poor. For the garret of the necessitous student is more favorable for intellectual exertion and advancement in holiness, than the lofty apartment of the lettered son of fortune in the midst of his alcoves and pictures of the mighty dead.

Mary was poor, and could not purchase books; she was obliged to labor constantly, and if she had had them, she could not have found leisure to read them. But she loved the pleasures of solitude, and many a day she has passed in the garret by her wheel, drinking from the purest fountains in both worlds.

D'Israeli has a striking thought in his "Literary Character" kindred to this:

"The desert of solitude, so vast and so dreary

to the man of the world, to the man of sanctified genius, opens the magical gardens of Armida, whose enchantments arose amidst solitude while solitude was every where among those enchantments."

I conceive that to the mind which is cultivated with literature and piety, and to the heart which has enshrined the hallowed associations of a New England home, there must be something attractive in such a scene of mingled industry and high devotion as is presented in the obscure but not ignoble life of Mary Ann Reed. It reminds us of the stories we have heard told of the good old days of the pilgrim fathers, when their daughters grew up in chastity and virtue, and found delight in the honorable employments of domestic industry. The tale related to me by a venerable old gentleman of Connecticut, I distinctly remember.

"When I was a young man," said he, "the boys went out to the field and the girls to the milking; and when the cheese was made, they went to the old kitchen chamber, and whirled the wheel with that brisk and lively movement which showed good spirits and robust health, and sung merrily their songs as sweet as those

which now sound through the halls of modern luxury."

But he had grown old, and reared up around him a cultivated family, adorned with every refinement which wealth could purchase or fancy invent.

"Instead," said he, "of the harp and pianoforte, which constantly interrupt the peace of my dwelling, and deprive me of all the simple and unadorned glory of my father's house, I long for the sound of the wheel, which was the music that delighted my boyhood, and the angelic voice of my sister who now sleeps in the dust.

"And in one of my solitary walks," he continued, "a few days since, as I passed an humble cottage, I heard that familiar sound. I approached the dwelling, and from the chamber window came the music of a female voice, blending with that sweet sound. I sat down, and remained unobserved an hour, till night warned me homeward; and I left the place whose music was more delightful to my old heart than the music of the spheres."

Although this may sound dissonant to the ear of modern taste, yet it betrayed in the old man all the poetry of that life which the novelist and

bard entwine into the scenes of romance, and would probably fascinate the novel-reading community if it were a creation of the fancy.

Our fathers sought for domestic happiness in other scenes, and found it too; and all will confess that their philosophy was more rational than that of modern times. This invaluable boon ("Oh! what a falling off") is now courted amid the splendor and gaiety of fashion, or the fascinations of a ball-room or a theatre. But oftener does she seek the humble cottage of the peasant, or take up her abode beneath the covert of the poor, than in the halls of wealth and fashion, or under the

> "Canopies of costliest state,
> And lulled with sounds of sweetest melody."

I have dwelt at length upon this part of my story, for I know that Mary loved the simplicity of an unadorned and holy life; and although it may be vain, yet I would lift my feeble voice against the degeneracy of modern days.

But although Mary loved solitude, and would often spend whole days alone, yet she was not a recluse; she cherished no misanthropic feelings, for every chord in her bosom was alive to the

deepest impressions of sympathy and benevolence. Hers was not a closet religion, which breathes "when the door is shut" the accents of prayer never so sweetly, and yet sheds none of the fragrance of good work around; but a scene of blended diligence and devotion.

The claims of both worlds were well adjusted in her mind. They are not incompatible; they never come in collision. This narrow sphere of our being has strong claims for our regard, and while we are citizens of the world we are bound to perform the duties of citizenship. The obligations which arise from these relations must be manfully discharged. But the great realities of a future life institute their imperious demand for our chiefest regard; and who that is not besotted with delusion, or bereft of common sense, will not suffer those tremendous scenes to engage his deepest solicitudes?

"It is despicable, indeed, when we, who would not suffer the vast and awful expanse of eternity to eclipse this speck of time, to allow this speck to eclipse that infinite expanse, flushed as it is with radiant glories or kindling flames."

If the claims of both worlds were properly appreciated, science would lose nothing and reli-

gion would gain infinitely. For the truth of this, we have only to appeal to the history of philosophy since the Reformation of 1517. Calvin was as well versed in jurisprudence as any of his contemporaries. Locke was the greatest metaphysician of his age. Bacon was equally eminent in law, philosophy, and theology. Newton loved the Architect of the heavens; and while his great mind led forth the march of natural science, his bosom burned with the devotion of a seraph. Edwards was at once the greatest metaphysician and divine of America; and if we can gather any light from the chronicles of the past or prophecies which gild the future, science will celebrate her Augustine triumphs when Christianity erects her throne upon the empire of the world.

It has been the vile taunt of infidelity, in heaping its profligate abuse upon the Cross, that religion dampens the fires of genius, and narrows down the scope of the human mind. But it is the province of skepticism to ridicule where I cannot argue.

Christianity is friendly to intellectual culture, and, as in the instance before us, will develope the noblest features of our nature where infide-

lity would have scattered only mildew, barrenness, and death.

Religion delights in every thing that can honor God or make man happy, and would have her votaries conversant with the works of Homer and Tacitus as well as those of David and Paul.

I cannot forbear quoting a single paragraph from the address of Albert Barnes before the Alumni of Hamilton College, it is so forcible and apposite. He says:

"From the halls of this institution let not a love of classic learning ever depart; but may we be permitted to know that this is a spot where the academic grove shall be loved as well as the sweet retreats of piety, and where the heights of Parnassus shall be ascended by those who love also to climb the hills of Zion, and where rich draughts shall be drawn from the Castalian fount as well as from the waters of Siloam."

Religion seemed to have its legitimate influence upon Mary's mind; it elevated and refined all her tastes, developed and invigorated all her powers. Her genius was impregnated with the spirit of Calvary, and all her productions and all her deportments bespoke the high source of her

illumination. Her astonishing acquisitions under the heavy pressure of misfortune and privation, must be attributed mainly to the inspiring influences which radiated from the religion of her Redeemer.

From the moment when the anticipations of Christian hope first dawned upon her soul, she entered with alacrity upon the paths of Christian obedience. Her life was a steady and unwavering light, which, like the day-spring, shineth more and more unto perfect day. There were no fitful blazes of devotion in her walk. She never floated on the wave of social emotion. She never resembled the rivulet which depends upon showers, sometimes babbling in a noisy torrent, and sometimes exhibiting a dry and empty channel. The spring-head of her religion was in God; hence the stream never died or fluctuated.

Although she loved the pleasures of solitude, and her happiest moments were spent in her closet, yet her piety exhibited *nobler* features. Like her Saviour, she "went about doing good." She was watchful of the interests of the cross, and the salvation of souls; and many who attribute their conversion under God to efforts and pray-

ers, now live to heap honors upon her tomb, and "rise up and call her blessed."

She warned all her thoughtless associates day and night with tears, and many of them, who are still "without God and without hope in the world," will remember her earnest but tender expostulations as long as eternity shall roll.

CHAPTER XII.

"Her sphere was humble, but that humble sphere
Shone with her fair example, and, though small
Her influence, yet that influence all was spent
In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works,
From which at least a grateful few derived
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe."

COWPER.

ONE spectacle awoke Mary's bleeding sympathies, and elicited the following epistle in her eighteenth year. I am permitted to state the facts, and publish her letter entire.

Her sister ———, in the flush of young affection, had united her fortunes with one who afterwards fell a victim to the cruel monster Intemperance.

She felt deeply for her beloved sister, who had so early been bereaved of her husband's tenderness and affection by a misfortune more crushing than death. Mary had seen the storm sweep over her bosom, and she made a mighty and protracted effort for his reformation. Under the strong

impulses of a sister's love and a Christian's benevolence, she wrote this stupendous letter while on a bed of sickness.

Dear Sir,

What shall I say to you, O my brother? Will you listen to the voice of a sister, who feels deeply for your happiness and the comfort of those around you? Will you listen to your fellow-mortal, and your companion in sin and infirmity; one who feels that she is but a babe in knowledge, and has a very turbulent world within, that requires all her counsel and advice? But let my conduct be ever so culpable, which I know it is, I cannot help seeing that *you* also are wrong; that the path you are pursuing has no termination but in ruin! Yes, my brother, everlasting woe!

I believe you are sensible that your temper is irritable. Well, are you not convinced that ardent spirits tend to increase that irritability? If you are not, as little as my experience has been, I have observed it with much concern, and so have your other friends. Oh! that you would listen to my voice, and shun this fatal evil; all around you are calling upon you to desist. You

will say that you do not drink *much*. I believe you do not; but be it ever so little, I am sure its effects upon you are dreadful. You certainly could not let your rage extend to such frightful lengths as you now do unless your passions were first heated by inflaming liquors until they will take fire even at a breath.

You believe your mother is not insensible to pain and mortification of feeling; you believe that she can feel afflictions. If you do, oh! do not add another drop of misery to her cup, for it is now already full; do not add another to the many pangs you have already made her feel. She rejoices in your happiness and prosperity. She cannot see you either prosperous or happy while you pursue your present course. Yes; joyless must be the heart of your mother to behold her son, her *only* son, wasting his time at the tavern, neglecting his business and family, ruining his health and reputation, and hurrying as fast as possible to a hopeless and untimely grave.

It is but a few days since your mother followed to his last resting place your brother, and saw him laid beneath the cold damp earth, and hid forever from her sight, when he might, in all pro-

bability, had he lived a regular life, been blooming in health, her solace and support.

But he has gone to him who cannot err or do injustice. It surely must wring your mother's heart with the keenest anguish to see the *last prop of her declining years*, him to whom her dying husband committed the care of herself and family, and who, he fondly hoped, would prove faithful to his trust—to see *such* a son following the same path that led your lamented brother to his exit.

I never heard that your brother indulged in such violent anger as you do, or that he gave way to his temper on the most trifling occasions.

What cause have you ever had to indulge such severe wrath as you often do to your wretched wife? What grievous sin has the companion of your youth committed, that you should treat her thus? Is she not willing to obey you? Does she not treat you with respect? Does she not address you kindly, except when irritated by your abusive language and conduct? And then, who could bear it more patiently than she has? Were her conduct perfectly inconsistent with the character of a wife, would it not be better for you to treat her with mildness and forbearance?

Would it not be more likely to reform her? Would it not be more becoming the dignity of a man, a husband, and a companion? You would despise the man who should treat his brutes with the greatest cruelty because they were in his power, and could not defend themselves; how, then, can a man, and a man of sense too, descend to any thing so degrading as to abuse his family because he can do it with impunity? to indulge in such violent fits of rage as, you must acknowledge, would be hateful even in a beast? A man who yields to such sin, is doing just as Satan wishes to have him—he is ruining soul and body; he has forgotten his Maker's laws, which forbid the cherishing of anger or wrath; he has forgotten that men are required to love their wives, and treat them with affection; he has forgotten that he does not deal out such treatment as he wishes to receive from others, and that he makes all around him unhappy; and finally, he does not remember that he drives arrows of distress through bosoms in his family more sensitive than his own.

Beware, oh my brother, how you plant thorns in the bosom of her you have chosen to be the companion and friend of your life. Of her you

have promised to love and protect; of her who has borne you children; of her who has been kind to you in sickness and in health. Oh! do not repay all her kindness with ingratitude. I fear you are planting thorns that it will not be in your power to eradicate from the place where you have strown them.

Grief will prey upon the strongest constitution, and I see that the canker-worm has already begun his work. Nothing could be more afflicting to a mind of sensibility, than to see the husband of her youth estranged from her bosom; for he certainly must be estranged from her, or never loved her, who can treat a wife unkindly. I am sorry to say this is true of you. I have *seen* it, or I should not have known it. If you expect happiness, your conduct must be uniform; and remember, that a year of kindness cannot atone for one hour of violent abuse.

Oh brother! would to God you would conquer this inflammable temper, which thus masters you, and worketh ruin and death. Oh that you would listen to a sister who loves you and the wife of your bosom with all a sister's affection. She would be sorry to wound your feelings, and only desires your good. Your happiness lies near my

heart, and when I feel thus interested, how can I be silent? I have long wished to address you on this painful subject, but have been prevented from a conscious inability and a fear of irritating your temper; but I must speak *now*, though you disregard my appeal. If you heed not *my* voice, oh trifle not with the feelings of your *wife*.

Do not disregard the counsel of your *mother*. Look upon those sweet *babes* she bore you, whom you promised to love and protect. Look upon your *babes* I say, and see if you can have a heart to abuse *their mother*. Grief has already impaired her health. Oh, do not again wound her lacerated bosom. If you do, it may give you cause for deep and lasting regret. But if you do not respect *her* feelings, oh look upon your *children*, and have *pity*. If you persist in the path you now tread, you will surely bring ruin upon those sweet innocents you love. I would fain hope better things of you, my brother: that you would entirely forsake the ensnaring bowl! that you would cultivate a love for industry and domestic happiness. Then will your life glide smoothly away, and your *end*, oh, how much happier it will be! Can you review such a life as you have led with pleasure? I wish

you to be sensible that love for your best interests has prompted these lines. They have been occasioned by my own observations *alone*. Though S—— has locked her sorrows in her own bosom, I can see that she is afflicted. Though she thinks I am unacquainted with them, yet I feel them too. That you may receive these lines in friendship, as they are written, and that they may cause you to stop a moment and consider whence you came, *what you are*, and whither hastening, is the fervent prayer of your sister,

MARY ANN REED.

P. S. I hope you will admit my apology for the length of this letter, which the warmth of my feelings only can excuse.

Mrs. A—— hesitated for some time about consenting to have this letter published. "For," said she, "I shall feel tenderly towards him if he is a drunkard." "What," I replied, "and did not this letter reclaim him?" "No, my dear sir," she answered, "he is now a wandering vagabond." "Well, madam," I said, "I suppose you cherish no hopes of his reformation; and if such an appeal as this, coming from such a source, was unheeded, it would be the dictate of wisdom to let him alone."

Mary was confined within the bounds of her native valley most of her life; but on one occasion she visited Western New-York, and spent a few weeks in the society of her sister Julia, who was her favorite correspondent of the family, and a woman of no common stamp. During this period she wrote frequently to her friends, but all her letters have perished except two, from which we make some extracts. To a sister, she says:—

"I suppose you would like to hear the adventures of Mary since she left the happy valley. Well, she got to sister Julia's safe and sound, and slept in a log-house for the first time, and has rested as finely as she ever did in her life. * * * Mr. N—— I don't think much of, for he charged me a dollar for his gallantry, and chivalry should dispose of its wares cheaper than this. We rode all night in the rain, and a gloomy night it was too: for there was only one female and two men aboard. * * * But I was treated with much politeness through the whole of my journey, although I was 'wandering alone.' Tell mother I received none of those insults she prophecied. I finally arrived here, and such a dreary looking country you

never saw. Nothing to be compared to our sweet valley. I don't know what you would think of the woods, and 'clearings, and *varmints*,' and log-houses. Good-bye. M."

She kept a journal while absent, but no trace of it remains. She appears to have been enraptured for a while with Western scenes; but the romance soon passed away, and she desired once more to be sheltered by her blue mountains.

It is evident, from her subsequent writings, that none of her religious principles or emotions were dissipated in the wildliness of the West or the irreligious influences of travelling. It was the remark of a great and good man of England, who made the tour of the Continent, when he returned, that "the man who can live a devotional life while travelling, is ripe for heaven." Any man of common observation, who has mingled with the tide which is constantly drifting towards the West, must be conscious that the atmosphere of such scenes is unfriendly to deep spiritual feeling. But some Christians seem to be protected against all such influences by the magic charm of the Holy Ghost. So it was with Mary. Her health was transiently improved by

the journey, and she began to hope for brighter days; but it soon grew worse after her return.

In allusion to it, she says in a letter to her sister Julia:

"A cloud hangs over my prospects, and it is well that it is so; for when we see a storm rising, we betake ourselves to a covert from its fury. Guide me, oh thou great Jehovah, in the path I should go; make my duty so plain that I cannot err with all my blindness and ignorance. Do not suffer me to bring evil wilfully or unwittingly upon myself or others, and when thou layest thy hand upon me, may I behave like a Christian. I would say in the words of Dow, 'If my way is wrong, hedge it up that I may not get through; but if right, may I walk in sunshine.' * * * I am sorry I have so often betrayed my feelings to my sisters, for I have learned that we cannot tell too *many all our soul;* and it seems to me that I have lately lost the confidence of some of my sisters, and I feel like an alien. I will endure it, for it is only a small share of what I deserve. But my heart is pained, sister Julia, with oppressive sadness; and I have no resource but to pour out its sorrows into the bosom of affection and sympathy.

I do not anticipate much worldly enjoyment *ever*.

> And such is Life; a changing scene,
> Its blisses few and far between;
> To-day the sunshine of delight,
> To-morrow wretchedness and night.

Farewell, Dear Sister. Dow says "the only way to *fare well*, is to *do* well.

Your's, with a Sister's love,

MARY.

CHAPTER XIII.

"He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doomed to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn, while he must,
Below the skies, but having there his home."

THE TASK.

ABOUT the close of the year 1830, Mary's ardent desire for moral culture prompted her to address a letter to Mr. O——, a worthy and intelligent member of the Rev. Mr. W——'s church, on the subject of personal holiness. The correspondence became mutual, and continued for a considerable time. It is all published in this work, for it is so rich and luminous that I could not omit any portion of it. She was now nineteen years of age, but these letters would honor a more eminent source. She had spent a considerable time in Mr. O——'s house, and having become very much attached to his family, she re-

vealed to them her feelings without any reserve. It was one of those families where loveliness and virtue are always appreciated and beloved. It is perfectly evident that the thought never entered her mind for a moment that any of her letters would be read by any but those to whom they were addressed, much less that they would ever be published.

Austerlitz, Sabbath eve. Dec. 12, 1830.

Mr. and Mrs. O——

Dear Friends,

I trust you will pardon me for visiting, in this silent manner, friends endeared to me by the strongest ties; who will ever seem very dear to me from a consideration of their kindness to me while a resident under their roof, and the deep anxiety they have always evinced for my spiritual as well as temporal interests. Yes, my dear friends (for such I consider you, and such I presume you will permit me to call you), the recollection of your family is associated with feelings and scenes which deeply concern the future well-being as well as the present felicity of Mary. It well becomes me to remember the impressions made upon my mind while a member

of your family, for they are essential to my happiness.

But oh, how will "the gold become dim, and the fine gold be changed!" How different have been my feelings since, from what they were then. Oh Mrs. O——, you know not what a death-like apathy has overspread my soul. I am in bondage to sin, and oppressed with a weight of guilt; and chains I have tried in vain to throw off. My fears have been sadly realized; I feared if I made a profession of religion, I should not live agreeably to it, and thus bring dishonor upon the cause I have espoused. What do I more than others? Alas! nothing, nothing, I answer with heart-felt sorrow; nothing for His kingdom who died to redeem us from sin. Ah! how can I remain dead to the remembrance of His loving-kindness! My heart bleeds for its hardness, stupidity, and ingratitude. Oh that the Omnipotent Spirit, that breathed upon the dry bones and they lived, would wake me from this sleep. Awake! Oh sleeper! and arise, for the night of death soon cometh when no man can do probation work. O that I might feel this before it is too late to act under its impulse.

My example must have exerted a powerful

influence in prejudicing others against the religion I have dishonored. It is a fearful thing, too, to bring odium upon the cross in the world. Men are unwilling enough to heed the mild precepts of Christianity, without seeing those who profess to obey them more guilty than themselves.

My association with the thoughtless has led me to wander from my covenant path. It is astonishing that I should for a moment forget the vows there I made; but it is evident from the levity I display, that "God is not in *all* my thoughts." O that I might hereafter be mindful of my accountability to Him who sealed my covenant engagements in heaven.

How often in moments of thoughtlessness and levity, in which I have too often indulged, has the remembrance of your family altar rose up before me, and I have sighed for its enjoyments, and felt that I could not there find greater happiness than in the gay circles I have sometimes visited during the past season. I remember with delight that hallowed altar, and all the fond affection of my bosom cling to it still.

I suppose while I am engaged in writing to you at this still and solemn hour, you have gone up

to the house of him that heareth prayer, with those who keep holy time; you have assembled on that spot where we first entered into covenant vows. Can we for a moment forget what the recording angel did not fail to notice, what will augment our joy or grief "when time shall be no longer?" O that I might continually walk in the fear of him whose loving-kindness changeth not; who follows me with mercy through the day, and watches with guardian care over my sleeping pillow.

Oh thou

> "Who spreads the evening veil, and keeps
> The silent hours while Israel sleeps,"

guide me to the still waters of Siloam. O, thou fount of every blessing, inspire my heart with gratitude and my lips with praise to thee, who thus crowneth my days with favor and tender mercy; and, above all, make me truly thankful for the amazing gift of thine only Son, our righteousness, our redemption, and our hope. Give me, O my Father! if thou wilt permit the veriest child of sin on earth to call thee Father, vile as I am—if I may not, I am truly desolate—give me a heart that is willing to accept of a Saviour in the way

God designed sinners to approach him. I am astonished at my insensibility and rebellious spirit, but I know Thou canst subdue it. Oh that thou wouldst impress thine image upon it, and from henceforth be thou the father and guide of my youth. Do not suffer my goodness to be like the early dew, but like the sun in heaven. Excuse, dear friends, my egotism, for I am writing a diary rather than a letter. But do not forget me when you kneel, morning and evening, to supplicate the care and mercy of him who heareth our cry. Oh, do not forget then, that Mary desires an interest in your prayers. Pardon the length of this token of friendship, and favor me, if possible, with an answer, and it will be gratefully received by MARY.

This letter elicited the following reply, which I am happy in being permitted to publish :—

Austerlitz, Jan. 10th, 1831.

DEAR MARY.

I received your kind and affectionate letter soon after date, and was glad once more to hear something of your feelings. You are pleased to allude to some of those happy scenes which you passed through at my house and elsewhere,

when the Lord was with us, and salvation was all the theme; when we were rejoicing in the great Redeemer, "who came to seek and save that which was lost;" when our souls were filled with the rapture of love to Jesus; when sinners were pressing into the kingdom of Christ; when the song of salvation was bursting from the new-born soul, and when sinners took Christians by the hand, and exclaimed with tears, "pray for me." Ah! the recollection of such scenes can never be obliterated from my mind.

"Then I thought my mountain strong,
Firmly fixed no more to move:
Then my Saviour was my song,
Then my soul was filled with love.
Those were happy, golden days,
Sweetly spent in prayer and praise."

Little did I then know what conflicts the Christian is called to pass through in this howling wilderness. Little did I then think that so soon I should lay aside my armor, and desert my post. But I have slept on my shield, I have lost my helmet, and dishonored my profession, and brought contempt upon that cause which will be glorious long after we are laid beneath the clods of the valley. Yes, dear Mary, when the earth

shall be burned up, and the moon become black as sack-cloth of hair, and the stars have all gone out in the night of ages, this cause will still be glorious. And why shall we not labor for it here? Every Christian can do something for it; but while Christians are slumbering, sinners are perishing; borne along by that mighty current which sets towards interminable woe! * * We have lately had a number of prayer meetings in our neighborhood, and some tokens of good appear. Christians are engaged and sinners are aroused; and I think the Lord is about to pour out his Spirit. (Such was the result.) Let us "bring all the tithes into the store-house, and prove him," and he will rain down righteousness. You speak of the injurious influence of gay company upon your feelings. I know, dear Mary, that young professors are doubly exposed to the fiery darts of the adversary, and you should put a double guard around you, especially in every assailable point. Oh, would to God all our youth would consecrate their early and active honors at the foot of the cross. May the God of the fatherless be your eternal redeemer. * *

Affectionately Yours,

D—— C—— O——.

In a few weeks she addressed Mr. O—— another communication, which we give below.

Saturday Eve. Feb. 26, 1831.

Mr. O——

Dear Sir,

Accept my unfeigned thanks for your kind and edifying epistle, which I should have answered before this had I not feared that my too frequent communications might be burdensome to you, unless they were more profitable or interesting. I do not suppose any one can be benefited by my letters, but from yours I expect to reap much advantage if you will be so kind as to number me among the list of your correspondents. If I had not been previously acquainted with the kindness and condescension of your disposition, I should not have ventured to solicit any share of your letters, as I well know the multiplicity of engagements to which you are daily called.

We are commanded to be ready and willing to communicate in all good things; and who, pray, needs your counsel or advice more than Mary? You will remember that my situation and station in life have been unfriendly to the acquisition of knowledge, and the most trying elements have

been mingled in my cup. But I will not complain, for I have not improved the facilities I have enjoyed. You will remember, also, that I am a girl of tender years, and a babe in knowledge; but one who has lived long enough to be matured in the ways of sin and folly.

Appreciating these circumstances, I hope you will not peruse these lines with the eye of criticism, but rather read them through the veil of charity and brotherly love.

Indeed, it would seem like presumption for me, who am thus unworthy and obscure, to ask a gentleman of your attainments to hold a correspondence with me if I did not know that you endeavor to follow the example of him who did not count his blood too rich a sacrifice for the atonement of human guilt. Oh, what infinite love was this, worthy of our feeble imitation and ceaseless praise.

Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah? Why are thy robes stained with blood, as if thou hadst trodden the wine-press alone? I have trod it alone, oh man. I have borne all the indignation of thy justly offended Maker, that thou mightst live. I have borne thy transgression, and received the

punishment for thy iniquity. I looked, and there was no helper, none to deliver thy fallen race. But I arose the Prince of Peace, the great Immanuel, who am all-powerful to deliver and mighty to save.

Oh, whose grief was like unto Thine, thou Saviour of sinners? thou who didst make all things, and yet hadst not a place where to lay thy head, and died to redeem thy own murderers. Oh, my dear Mr. O——n, whose love was ever like unto the love of our Saviour? When I would speak of it, my tongue is mute; I cannot find language to describe such ineffable kindness.

How can we remain idle and asleep in the vineyard which has been enriched with such precious blood? How can we pursue the road to death, and see our friends follow us on to such a doom, when the price of our redemption was so costly and the worth of souls so infinite? It seems as if we cannot; and I think I can now say to my young friends, I *will* not; and beseech them in the anguish of my spirit, "Come, let us return unto Him we have pierced with our sins" *now*, while the sentence has not yet gone forth, while the cloud is yet in the distance; for oh!

who of us could dwell in devouring fire, who could endure the deep agony of eternal burnings, who can withstand the just vengeance of an incensed Creator? We have closed our ears to his counsels; but he yet calls, "Come unto me, and though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. I will heal your backslidings, and remember your iniquities no more." Oh! is it in the power of the human heart to resist such melting appeals?

But some unfriendly influence crosses my path, and my animation in the divine life vanishes like the dew-drop on the rose.

"Ye who love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it so with you?"

Tell me, do you wander from the fold of God after being safely sheltered in its enclosure? I certainly wish to love God supremely, and I sometimes think I do. He is my shield and my helmet—my strong tower and my only hope—my righteousness and justification—my intercessor and my everlasting friend! When I contemplate the glorious Son of God, I am filled with ecstacy. I see no cloud on his visage or imperfection in his character. He is altogether lovely. But when

I contemplate myself, I am filled with distress; for I see not his image in my heart—vileness reigns there triumphant. If hope whispers that I have an interest in the Saviour's blood, I dare not fully believe it, for those that love him will keep his commandments. * * * * * * I rejoice to learn that some in your neighborhood begin to see their characters in some measure as God seeth them. Oh, may this cloud, no larger than a man's hand, blacken in the heavens. I feel my need of its refreshing influence, and I must acknowledge that the most striking feature in my religious character is stupidity and indifference.

Oh, Mr. O——n, is it not cheering to think that we are mortal *here* and immortal *beyond* the tomb? that in a few days we shall shake off this tabernacle of sin and infirmity, and go home to the bosom of our Redeemer? There we shall cease from sorrow, because we shall cease from sin.

O that we might all meet in the climes of glory, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest." Pardon the length of this epistle, written by one who feels

happy in being permitted to style herself a friend and sister in the Lord Jesus,

MARY ANN.

This letter was soon answered, and we will give a few passages from it, for they will serve to introduce another interesting feature in Mary's experience, which will be opened in the next chapter.

DEAR MARY,

I was rejoiced to receive your interesting letter, and find that religion was its theme; for it is a subject which I always love to contemplate. You speak of the Great Redeemer. I often indulge in kindred reflections, and it is to me a great mystery that Jesus Christ, who was Lord of the heavenly hosts, should condescend to leave his throne, and suffer all the frightful and heart-chilling scenes he passed through from his cradle to his tomb to redeem the rebellious subjects of his empire. Immortal honors are due to the captain of our salvation. Oh Mary! if you and I have embraced this Saviour, we shall soon behold him in glory, and be folded in his almighty bosom. But what multitudes around us care for none of these things, flying on to the judgment-seat of

Christ, and no concern about the vastness and eternity of the sufferings for which they are ripening. But this is not an age of stupidity. No! blessed be God, the tide of revivals is rolling over the broad bosom of our land; and in hundreds of places the rising sun witnesses the blooming youth, who have been accustomed to unseasonable repose, wending their way to the prayer meetings, to supplicate the mercy of God.

We have prayer meetings, and good will follow; for they are filled with the spirit of God. The females in our neighborhood have also had meetings for prayer, and I am told they are melting scenes. Oh! what Christian can sleep in this revival era? I hope, Mary, that you will immediately establish a female prayer meeting in your neighborhood. In this way you can do a vast deal of good. I know you have often done such things, and rejoice when you have an opportunity to speak a word or do an act for God. Make the effort, and trust the event with Christ. Oh, remember the agonizing groans of Calvary, and the blood that flowed from Immanuel's veins, for the sanctification and salvation of sinners; and oh, use your influence with God's people in our society, for sinners are perishing

and God's name is dishonored; and if they are ever converted, it must be in answer to prayer; for God has said that for all these things he will be inquired of, to do it for them.

I think we are on the eve of another glorious revival, and doubt not that soon God will pour out his Spirit, and bring sinners unto the solemn feasts of Zion. Let us do our duty as Christians, and I doubt not that in a few weeks we shall see salvation flow. * * * *

Yours, with regard
and Christian affection,
D—— C—— O.

"As the gray lines that fret the east
Are messengers of day;"

so the lines of light and faith stream up to heaven from the church of God, when the darkness begins to roll off the heights of Zion and they are gilded by the Holy Spirit; that spirit which breathes life and animation over the valley of dry bones, which awakens the dormant genius of Christianity, and spreads beauty and fertility over her holy grounds. The sound of the trumpet, as it sends its thrilling notes through the camp of war, summoning the warrior to combat and

victory, is never greeted with so much enthusiasm as the summons from heaven, "behold the bridegroom cometh," which breaks over the followers of the Lamb as they prepare for the achievements of the cross. There is something delightful in the spirit-stirring energy of such a scene. And these last letters are flushed with that spirit which betokened better days—a spirit of hope, and faith, and humiliation. The cloud increased till it filled the heavens, and a shower of righteousness watered that valley.

CHAPTER XIV.

"As in soft silence vernal showers
Descend, and cheer the fainting flowers,
So, in the secrecy of love,
Falls the sweet influence from above.

"Nor let these blessings be confined
To me, but poured on all mankind;
Till earth's wide wastes in verdure rise,
And a young Eden bless our eyes."

RIPPON.

IN 1827 the Lord's spirit had been poured out in mighty effusions over that whole region, and multitudes were brought into the church, while the whole neighborhood seemed standing on the verge of heaven.

The trail of that revival was still shedding its brightness around, and this spring, (1831,) the congregation seemed to be on the eve of another revival. Several conversions occurred about this time, and the whole church besieged the throne of grace with the prayer of faith, as God came down in his glory.

At this time a young gentleman, who was studying divinity with the Rev. Mr. Woodbridge,

took an active and interesting part in some of the social meetings. Mary attended these meetings, and, as usual, felt a deep interest in the cause of her Redeemer.

Unbeknown to any other human being, she addressed an anonymous letter to this gentleman, to encourage him in his high and holy enterprize of preparing for the office of a watchman of Zion.

It was not ascertained till a long time afterwards that she wrote the letter, and its tone was so superior to her fame and station, that at last she was discovered only by casually comparing its hand-writing with her own.

Austerlitz, Monday Eve., May 25, 1831.

Mr. S——y,

Dear Sir,

Astonishment is depicted in your countenance, and your surprise compels you to exclaim, "to what illiterate and unknown stranger am I indebted for this unceremonious scrawl?"

I will tell you who I am, if you will please to grant me your patience, and promise to cover this communication with the veil of charity and brotherly love. I am no one of the literati;

no one of those who have been educated in the schools of philosophy has presumed to address you; but one over whose head scarce twenty summers have rolled, whose opportunities for instruction have been extremely limited, and whose name is known only to a few friends beyond her native valley. But, notwithstanding all this, I am, dear Brother, your fellow-traveller to "that bourne from which no traveller returns;" and therefore wish to say to you, "God speed" in this glorious enterprise in which you appear to be so zealously engaged. Yes, this cause is supremely glorious; and suffer me, dear sir, to say, as unworthy as I am, be active, oh! be active in striving to win souls to Christ as crowns of your rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

I have seen you probably for the only time until we meet at the judgment seat, yet I must acknowledge that I feel deeply solicitous that you should be a faithful messenger of the glad tidings of the great salvation which has been purchased for us at the expense of the greatest sacrifice ever offered.

Oh then, Brother, in consideration of this ineffable love, go forth strong in the might of

Him who did not esteem the blood of his only Son too rich for the redemption of lost man. He has promised to be with you; therefore fear not, though sent to the dark frontiers of the heathen world; to those who sit in the region of the shadow of death, whose situation I heard you so feelingly describe; for if you possess that spirit which your appearance manifests, he will assuredly go with you to prosper and to bless.

I must rejoice that I have seen one who, in the vestibule of life, has so unreservedly devoted himself to the service of his Lord and Master.

Be grateful that he has inspired you with such a spirit, and endeavor to improve your talents only for *His* Glory who has committed them to your trust.

Little as I practise the mild precepts of our holy religion, it rejoices me exceedingly to see others animated by their heart-cheering influence.

Dear Sir, we expect much good from your visit with our beloved pastor; oh that we might not be disappointed. Surely my young friends and companions cannot listen unmoved to these heartfelt and earnest entreaties to turn, and live, and seek salvation while it may be found.

* * * * * * * In this day of mighty refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which has spread fertility over the American Zion, we cannot feel that we are to be passed by. We would not be ungrateful for that small cloud which has overshadowed our congregation, but exclaim with panting hearts, Lord ! this is not enough. Let these drops be followed by an overwhelming shower, which shall extend over every part of this society, and ultimately over the whole earth, when we shall no longer say one to another, "know the Lord," for the last wanderer shall be gathered into the fold of God. When, oh when shall that admirable prayer of our blessed Redeemer be answered—"thy kingdom come?" Hasten, oh hasten that happy day when we shall no longer complain of these adamantine hearts ; for they shall burn with the purest love to Him who is alone worthy of our devoted attachment. May you and I, stranger, be prepared to welcome that day with exceeding joy. * * * * Oh that a Saviour's name may be glorified in our lives, and a Saviour's image enshrined in our hearts ! It is the earnest wish, dear Sir, of one who is happy to call herself a friend to the cause which has

enlisted your affections and labors, that you may see fruits of your efforts in this place before your departure—that you may see salvation flow like a flood ; for surely we need a special outpouring from the presence of the Lord.

The slumber of forgetfulness has come upon us, and we have fallen asleep upon enchanted ground. Oh that the power of Him who has the residue of the spirit may arouse us from the lethargy of sin. Be diligent, I beseech you, dear Sir, in striving to persuade my dear friends to hear *now* what our beloved pastor has so often repeated to us, "seek the Lord while he may be found."

May you be a blessing to this people, and wherever else you are called, may you be the honored instrument in God's hands of turning men to righteousness ; and when the Master has done with you here, may you be received where sin shall cease, where sorrow shall never enter, and God be all in all.

I have felt anxious for your future success, and have dared to express my good wishes, which shall follow you still. Yes, stranger, there is one in Columbia who earnestly desires that you may "enjoy the luxury of doing good."

Please to forgive this seeming impertinence, and pardon me if I subscribe myself an

UNKNOWN FRIEND.

A few days after the date of this letter, a protracted meeting was held, and it resulted in the addition of fifty persons to the church.

During this revival, although in exceedingly delicate health, Mary was foremost in the ranks of Zion, zealous in promoting its interests, judicious, efficient, untiring in holy action, constant in prayer. Her influence was great; for her life was so absorbed in godliness, that all who came within her sphere took knowledge of her that she had been with Jesus.

She often expressed the joy she felt when she saw the church wrestling in that agony of prayer which opens the windows of heaven, and heard the song of salvation breaking from the trembling lips of a penitent and rejoicing sinner.

At such seasons she was in an atmosphere peculiarly her own, where all her Christian graces expanded, and glowed with the soft radiance of devotion. Her benevolence was gratified; her longings for God's glory and man's salvation were in some degree satisfied; and all doubts

and darkness fled away, because she lost sight of herself in a full-orbed vision of the great Redeemer.

I have admired the force and beauty of that command of the great apostle, to "run with patience the race set before us, *looking unto Jesus*, the author and finisher of our faith." As long as the Christian broods over his own soul, he will be sad; doubts will cloud his spirit, darkness will obstruct his vision; for he cannot find resources of hope or consolation in his own heart. But when he forgets himself, and his own interests are merged in a higher good, and he fixes the steady vision of faith on the great polar attraction of his heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, he runs without obstruction along his path; and the joy of benevolence, which fires his soul, radiates his countenance. For this reason Christians enjoy vastly more of their privileges during revivals than at any other time. In working for God, they experience the joys of benevolence, kindred to the joy which thrilled the bosom of the Son of God; for we are told that "the joy set before him" urged him forward in that great enterprise. And who doubts that it was the joy of benevolence? When the church of Christ can learn to "follow

the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," and exchange periodical convulsive action for a steady, constant, untiring spirit of holiness; then individual professors will not only mount up on eagles' wings, but Zion will arise—"her light being come, and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her."

I have been told by Mary's friends, that although she was always spiritual, yet at such seasons as the church was now passing through, there was an etherial purity and elevation, an astonishing fervor and power, in her prayers. Although her path was onward and upward, and she grew in grace day by day, yet in these revivals she showed an uncommon advancement in holiness, and was never seen on a lower eminence than the point she last reached in the straight and narrow way.

It is one of the most important lessons, and yet one of the last that is learned by the child of God, that there should be no *going back* in the divine life. Every inch of ground he conquers should be kept, every strong-hold he takes from the enemy should be razed to the foundation, every captive sin should be slain. It is only in the active exercises of holy devotement to God

that the soul becomes fashioned after the image of Christ. The powers of the being must expand in the high and appropriate sphere of religious activity. The *whole man* must be embarked in this glorious enterprise of co-operation with God in schemes of infinite benevolence. Christians, in this country particularly, depend too much upon revivals for growth in grace and maturity for heaven; and often we see the zeal of professors at such seasons running into enthusiasm; and when the revival is past, that enthusiasm is followed by a protracted season of horrid coldness, stupidity, and unfaithfulness in duty. I say this with grief, and not with a spirit of censure; for I would rather be classed with enthusiasts than with that part of the church whose religion consists in quenching the zeal and spirituality of Zion altogether, and in extinguishing all her fires.

But why are either extremes necessary? Why cannot the church attain a steady and manly standard of piety, and maintain their ground and hold on their high career? But the Christian should not be satisfied with *maintaining* ground already won, he should *advance;* for Christianity is aggressive in its character; her spirit is no

less the genius of peace than of conquest. It is the design of religion to wage an eternal warfare against all unrighteousness; and no bright or enduring victories can be achieved by Zion or her friends, unless there is an aggressive, an advancing, a triumphant spirit, to inspire their efforts.

It has been remarked, that the life of every eminent Christian has exhibited one prominent and striking feature—*constant and untiring effort to obtain holiness.* Indeed, it is the essence of devotion of heart and activity of life; it is the secret of success in any religious enterprise. In this light it is easy to account for those instances of illustrious piety which have elicited the praises of the world.

I should fail to analyse Mary's character if I passed over this feature; for her astonishing attainments in grace must be attributed to constant fidelity in duty. Religion was the grand theme of her thoughts, conversations, and writings; the object of all her labors and the inspiration of all her hopes.

There was nothing convulsive or periodical, and consequently nothing ephemeral in her piety. She was ready at the first signal to enter the

work, and needed no long season of preparation, breaking down, agony, and almost despair, on account of past unfaithfulness, like other Christians around her. If she slept, she slept "with the harness on." And although she was full of zeal and high-toned spirituality during a protracted meeting, yet her flight was unwearied, and her energies did not flag when it was over. She said, "I make it a point to climb a little higher every day of my life." But who does not know, that a church which is clothed in sack-cloth to-day is often seen in purple to-morrow; that a Christian may lose more grace in an hour than he can get in a whole Pentecostal season?

These are great, fundamental principles, which God has incorporated into the economy of his grace, and that economy *demands* the alliance of the total being with its author in the plans of every department of his moral government; that the soul shall be brought, in the sphere of its duty, in close contact with the penetrating and refining rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and thus be moulded into the same "glorious image." It is here the Christian gains that firm faith, those lucid and habitual views of divine and eternal things, which correct all false esti-

mates of the worth of earthly joys or the evil of earthly sufferings, and which imparts to motives derived from the throne their full power upon the mind as present and vivid realities. Eternity rises before him in all its grandeur. He who walks daily in the light of heaven, has a divine power to enter into the emotions of God, and to mould the views, and habits, and character in accordance with the feelings and sentiments of that blessed world. He has an exquisite moral sensibility to the evils of all sin. Nothing is deemed light or trivial in the saint on earth over which the saint in heaven would weep, where perfect moral purity is the essential ingredient of bliss. His whole life is spent in a deathless struggle with indwelling sin and its inveterate power. Jesus Christ is the star of his moral firmament; and with a steady vision and aspiring soul, he mounts up on eagles' wings, till, circling nearer and nearer the centre of his attraction, he is lost in the bosom and bliss of his Redeemer. Such was Mary's piety. And when the young females of the American Zion reach such a standard, the church will "break forth in singing," for the victory will be won.

CHAPTER XV.

"In joyous youth, what soul hath never known
Thought, feeling, taste, harmonious to its own?
Who hath not paused, while Beauty's pensive eye
Asked from his heart the homage of a sigh?
Who hath not owned, with rapture-smitten frame,
The power of grace, the magic of a name?"

PLEASURES OF HOPE.

A BRIGHTER feature now opens upon the scene. A light appears, which will be greeted with pleasure by every one who loves human happiness. After years, homeless and sorrowful, had passed away, in which she had suffered those privations which chill the young heart's blood, Mary at last found a sanctuary of affection where she treasured up her love, and all her hopes began to rise in anticipation of the bliss of a bridal hour. She gave her heart away, and received a kindred one in return, and lived in the enjoyments of reciprocated affection. It appears that she was not married till about two years after her engagement, during which time she held

a correspondence with her lover. A part of this correspondence is still preserved, and a portion of it will be given, for the purpose of showing the influence of love upon her mind ; and also it may enliven the sketch, and serve to illustrate her general character.

There was an air of chasteness and purity, and a tone of high principle, in her writings and address during the days of her betrothment, which redeem them from the character such scenes often assume. As Horace was "omnis in hoc" with his MSS. so was she with the religion of her Redeemer. And if we can decide from her letters, it is evident that the fires of love only fanned the flames of devotion, and her soul never kindled with holier or loftier aspirings to Jesus Christ than in the hour of "Love's young dream." We give the earliest date which they bear.

Jan. 30*th*, 1831.

Dear B——

You will undoubtedly be surprised at an address on the subject of religion from one whose character you must have thought far, very far from being exemplary. But I hope you will not be offended if I thus silently speak to you of Jesus

Christ, for she who addresses you loves your temporal and spiritual felicity. Yes, dear B——, it is my earnest desire that, living or dying, you may be always blest. When you consider my motive, I hope you will spread the mantle of charity over this epistle, and pardon me if I now break that silence which I have so long maintained on this momentous subject.

I feel conscious of my guilt; and if you charge it upon me, I shall cheerfully receive your reproof, and hope it will tend in some measure to arouse me from that insensibility which pervades my moral feelings. Oh! can we refuse to listen to warnings and counsels on this subject, when they are whispered in our ears by Him who crowneth our lives with loving-kindness and tender mercies? Should we not live continually in the fear of him who is not unmindful of our happiness, although we have despised his beloved Son?

Dear B——, we desire happiness; it is a wish that is interwoven closely with the texture of our being; and how can we satisfy this ardent desire so well as by securing the favor of him who alone can bestow upon us permanent and lasting felicity?

In the enterprise of holiness we may meet with opposition, and in entering the service of God be greeted with enemies ; but a corrupt heart is the greatest enemy I find to oppose my progress. If Satan discovers any disposition to fly to God, any indication of heartfelt repentance, he will struggle hard for his expected prey. His mightiest effort is to persuade us to remain in bondage to sin, for if we continue but a little while, he knows that wretchedness and woe will be our eternal portion. Oh ! B——, would to God you would now in early life seek the pardon and grace of him who is not offended with the penitential prayer.

Our hearts are extremely corrupt, but we are unconscious of their *deep* vileness until we see it under the divine illumination. We cannot sincerely desire that "a new heart" may be created in us until we feel the hardness and burden of the old one, which must be changed. Oh ! that in early life you would seek this renovating power. Then you will not refuse your best affections to your Father. Dear B——, what love can ever equal that of him who gave his life for our justification ? Through this inestimable gift he condescends to solicit the love and

obedience of creatures his own hand hath made. Can we be so ungrateful as to refuse him our deepest love? Will we not hereafter exclaim, "My father, thou art the guide of my youth; hold me that I may not sin; keep me that I may not go astray; and may the love of religious virtue be implanted deeply in my soul." The friend of *penitent* sinners surely has the strongest claim to our supreme affections. * * *

I would rather have the friendship of Jesus Christ than all the wealth of the Indies; for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

What can be so soothing to a heart oppressed with sorrow as a consciousness that we possess the favor of God? What satisfaction can we have in thinking of his character or our own while in a state of alienation and forgetfulness of his claims? What are our worldly enjoyments, contrasted with the sublime pleasures of religion? What our worldly anticipations compared with her own? Are not all our temporal enjoyments stamped with vanity and vexation of spirit?

We have almost every day striking proofs of the shortness of human life, and the uncertainty

of its continuance; and will they not fasten in our minds those impressions of our own departure which will spread solemnity over all our feelings? I have heard with pleasure that some in Green River have seen the necessity of an interest in the atoning blood of the Son of God now in the vigor of youth. I hope this revival will pervade the whole place. I deeply feel my own need of its enlivening power, for I have fallen into so deep an insensibility to everlasting scenes, that nothing but the eternal spirit can arouse me from my slumber. I do not feel the worth of the soul as I ought; if I did, I should be more anxious for my friends and neighbors. If we are safely enclosed in the ark, we should feel very deeply for those who will have no covert to fly to when the waters overflow them.

How can a poor helpless mortal bear to take up at last that heart-rending lamentation, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved," because I rejected offered mercy? Can we endure devouring fire? Can we take up our abode in everlasting burnings? Can we withstand the just vengeance of an incensed God?

Now, dear B——, let Mary do as she may,

but *do*, oh *do not* grieve the Holy Ghost. We are told that the spirit shall *not always* strive with hardened, self-destroying man. He is now standing at the door of your heart, oh do not refuse admittance to this heavenly guest. But I do not know but that ere this you may have admitted him to your breast, to be the guide and counsellor of your future life. If so, I will rejoice with you, for I must own that my heart beats in unison with your own. I have observed in your manner a seriousness of late. I hope it is a token that you are not insensible to your everlasting state. You appear to *reverence* the things of religion; but, B——, this is not enough, you must heartily accept of Jesus Christ as your Prophet, Priest, and King. Oh that you would take the advice of Mary, and repent of sin, and seek an interest in the crucified Redeemer. I am conscious that holiness never received any lustre from my example or embellishment from my pen; but I would recommend its paths to your feet, for wisdom's ways are ways of holiness, and all her paths are peace. * * * *

Your own Mary.

This is one among the many noble efforts she

made for the salvation of Mr. Bise. He was a man who needed nothing but religion to finish his character, and nothing could have inspired such feelings in Mary's heart as the thought of parting with *him* at the judgment, whom she loved so well on earth. Her appeals were managed with discretion, and rendered affecting and impressive by the deep-toned piety and generous affection which pervaded them. She was so reserved, and exceedingly delicate in her deportment, that it required the ascendency of piety and benevolence to elicit such personal appeals as the following. But devotion was the chief element of her character, and desire to do good the strongest emotion of her soul.

April 3d, 1831.

My dear B——

If you believe the religion of Jesus Christ divine in its origin, and every way adapted to the circumstances of men, then why not heartily embrace it? Oh that you would, dear; for you would find its consolations supporting in every time of need. It is the only safeguard through this howling wilderness. It is the only guardian that can keep us from wandering in forbidden

paths, which intersect each other, till we are lost in the mazes of error. We have great reason to fear our sins, for they are our worst enemies, and yet those we are the most apt to love. Oh that we could see the loathsome nature of sin, and contemplate it as it is seen by the blessed Jehovah. May we feel its mighty influence in bringing us captive to its power, that we may fly to the rock of ages for refuge. * * * * Your religious advantages have been very great during the past winter; and oh, let me hope that you will not soon forget them. If you do, oh how awfully aggravated must be your condemnation.

But I cannot think that him I love will slight so many admonitions as you have heard this winter from kind hearts. Your friends, young and old, have called upon you to become decidedly religious; they have besought you with many prayers and tears to make your peace with God, and come out on the Lord's side, and go hand in hand with them to heaven.

You intend to embrace Christianity at some future period; why not *now*? That convenient season you are anticipating I fear will never come, and no time can be more favorable than the present. Let not these golden moments pass

by unheeded, for *possibly* before another winter comes you may be where hope never comes. You know the Bible says, that he that being often reproved and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. I remember, not many days since, reading the lamentations of a man who had passed the day of grace.

"I have," says he, "forgot to watch and be sober. I have sinned against the light of the word and the goodness of God. I have grieved the spirit, and he is gone. I have tempted the devil, and he has come to me. I have provoked God to anger, and He has left me. I have hardened my heart so that I *cannot* repent. Ah, woe is me! what shall I do? I have crucified to me the son of the Blessed afresh. I have despised his person and his righteousness, and counted his blood an unholy thing, because I would not fly to it as my only refuge. I have done despite to the spirit of grace, and therefore have shut myself out of all the promises, and there now remains for me nothing but threatenings dreadful; threatenings of certain judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour me as an adversary.

Oh! Eternity, Eternity! how shall I grapple with the misery I must meet with in eternity?"

Oh, Dear B——, never let us have to take up this thrice awful lamentation, nor any longer refuse the claims of the gospel, or turn away from the voice of the spirit, which says "*to-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Will old age be the most proper time to give God what he requires of us *now*? You know he says, "Son, give me thine heart." Will he accept the remains of our broken and shattered affections, which have so long been lavished upon objects which our better judgments despise? If we will not repent *now*, have we any warrant that the Holy Spirit shall still continue to strive. But who has promised that we shall ever reach old age, that much wished for, but when possessed, little enjoyed state? Who has forecast the future, and seen us alive in coming time? Are we not as liable to fall suddenly as those around us who have already fallen? Oh, dear B——, do now be persuaded to seek earnestly the kingdom of God, and you will joyfully fold the pinions of death to your bosom when he comes to take you home, and exclaim, "Hail, messenger of God. My Saviour has destroyed thy power. He has nerved

my soul for this hour." Do not let me urge you in vain, my dear; but listen to Mary's voice, and be determined steadfastly to seek religion now in the freshness of youthful days. It is always interesting to contemplate a young person, but doubly so one who walks in the fear of God and reflects honor upon the throne of Christ. Such a scene must attract the attention and admiration of the angels of heaven. If you are ever joined to a companion in life who loves God, how much would your bliss be augmented if your bosom glowed with the same emotion. How would it soften the pangs of separation in death to know that you would again be united in a happier clime, where the wild sound of parting should never be heard. I know of no sight more interesting than to see a young married pair erect their family altar, and say *we will* serve the Lord. All your young friends would rejoice to see your feet turned towards Mount Zion; and I need not tell you that it is the most anxious wish of my heart. But if you will not heed *Mary's* appeal, listen, I beseech you, to the voice of your friends, and the mandate of the everlasting Jehovah, who calls and says, "Son, give me thy heart." * * * * * * Your own Mary.

About this time Mary became a "factory girl." For a number of years she had supported herself by her own labor, and now she chose this new sphere for reasons unknown to the author. She hired out in a factory which stands on the banks of the Housetonic River, near the western border of the town of Stockbridge, by the base of a range of mountains which divides Massachusetts and New-York.

It seems a strange dispensation which awarded her such a lot. But the God of Christians is influenced by wise and benevolent considerations in *all* his dispensations. While she was engaged in this employment, she made rapid advances in holiness, and appears to have been happy and contented. For she had been inured to hardship, and she was happy in situations which others would scarcely have tolerated. Here she labored twelve hours each day, and for a long time could have had no leisure for prosecuting her literary pursuits, unless it was stolen from the night. This she often did ; and after the toils of the day were over, she wrote some of the most beautiful letters that ever came from her pen.

It is a pity that so few of them are preserved, for they were all of them worthy of a place, and

would have adorned these pages. The novelty of the fact renders these letters interesting, aside from the character of Mary; for it is so seldom that the writings of "factory girls" are brought before the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

"This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet."
ROMEO AND JULIET.

Stockbridge, ——— 1831.

DEAR B——.

I have not forgotten you, though I dare not flatter myself that I am still remembered by him I love, else why does he not write to me? Or is the Post to blame? or, &c. &c.?? It is painful to think that *one* we value, no longer cherishes us "in the innermost shrine of the heart." Well, be it so! If you have ceased to think of me, I hope your affections are placed upon some object that may awaken more bliss in your bosom than the love of Mary. You may find many more worthy of your regard, but none who loves you more fervently, or is more deeply interested in your happiness. * * * * *

I have longed for a letter from you. You have written to your sisters, and before I came back to the factory the last time, when E——

told me she had just received a letter from you, I thought I would contrive some way to get a glimpse at it. The thought brought a blush to my cheek; but I asked her, and took it as the blood mounted my temples, and at this price I purchased the pleasure. * * Well, I am a "factory girl" in good earnest, and although I am not situated as pleasantly as I could desire, yet I am contented; for you know my old maxim. I think we ought to look on the bright side of life, and, forgetting our inconveniences, we can find some enjoyments in every situation. All our seeming evil hides some latent good. But I solace myself with such philosophy as well as I can, when I am as impatient as I can be to see some *once* from my native valley. I shall look for you next ——; but I suppose I shall be obliged to look till my eyes ache with weariness, and then turn away disappointed, and sit down in very loneliness. I am solitary even in society. I look for those I have loved from childhood, but they are not here; I turn to find those in whose society I have found pleasure as unmixed as earth will allow, but I see them not. * * * * * * *

Monday evening.

All is hushed to silence, and I hear no sound but that of the water, whose music is ever friendly to thought, and see nothing from my window but the quietness of repose. The moonbeams playing over the falling water, make it as lucid as crystal, and the foam seems like an agitated bed of snow. The scene is inviting and impressive.

Oh thou beautiful Housetonic, I would love to stand the "live-long night" by thy side, and gaze upon thy flowing waters as the moon is pouring her silver radiance over thy bosom ; but the cool breezes of autumn pierce my frame, and nature demands new strength for the toils of the coming day.

Such a scene as this produces a pensiveness of thought grateful to the feelings. The images of absent or departed friends rise up before me in sweet and cherished thought at such an hour, their spirits seem to draw near to hold communings with me, and I forget that this dull clay debars the perfect interchange of soul. Oh, 'tis painful to be deprived of soul-loved friends, but I will endeavor to contemplate all this privation as the allotment of thy beneficent hand :

"Art thou a Christian, doomed to roam
Far from thy friends and native home?
Look round on valley, hill, and plain,
Cliffs crowned with trees and fields with grain;
View Nature's charms and busy man,
And tell me 'mid the varied plan,
What hast thou seen, or what surveyed,
That God thy father has not made?
Then love his works, and love to trace
His semblance in a stranger's face;
Call each sweet spot a home to thee,
And every man God's family."

How sweet and soul-cheering to think we have a friend from whom distance cannot separate us nor death rob us of. Oh, dear B——, may he be our friend. But perhaps I have said enough to you on the subject of religion, and you think it would be better recommended by example than precept. I am conscious of the truth of this sentiment, but I am still bound to lift a warning over your path; and your guilt, in rejecting the Son of God, will only be augmented by refusing reproof. I do hope, dear B——, you will not any longer neglect your duty, for God's spirit has long been striving with you, and soon the awful sentence must go forth, "he is joined to his idols, let him alone."

* * * * * Farewell, &c.,

Mary A. R.

DEAR B——:

You may have concluded ere this that Mary did not intend to keep her promise of writing to you in answer to your interesting letter. I have not forgotten my engagement, but have been prevented by a number of circumstances, trifling indeed, which I need not enumerate.

It is not because I have become a "factory girl" that I have been so parsimonious of my time as not to be able to devote a part of it in communing with an absent but beloved one; but I am situated very unfavorably for writing. I write this evening from Mr. B——n's, where I am visiting those girls *you* think so beautiful! Well, I concur fully with your opinion, and think them more lovely every day * *

This week, on Thursday, a protracted meeting commences in our church (the one already alluded to). My wardrobe, which is always rather scanty, is now scattered: but I had rather go to God's house in dishabille, than not to go at all. And oh, B——, if I could see you there, it would rejoice my heart; but if you cannot come, I must submit to it. I will not indulge in unavailing wishes. Truesdell says contentment is felicity, and I hope we may enjoy that happiness which

springs from well-regulated temper and habits. If conscience approve our actions, we shall be happy. * * * * * *

By the by Mr. Bise, "*I guess as how I can tell you some news.*" I hope it will not be afflictive to you; at any rate you must summon your courage, and bear it like a man. I fear it will destroy some air castles, some fond hopes of future—ahem—flirtation. But to the point, Miss S—— H—— was *married*, last week, to Mr. L—— M——. But I must close, for I have used my ink all up. Excuse my unusually laconic style, and accept a good promise of writing a longer and better letter soon. Yours ever,

M. A. R.

This playful allusion in the close of the letter is more characteristic of her sex than herself in particular. Although she was ordinarily very cheerful, yet from childhood her mind seemed to be constantly dwelling upon moral themes; and in the conscious elevation of her own thoughts, she could not stoop to laugh away her probation with the heedless throng of worldlings who inter celestial hopes without a sigh.

Such solemnity is affianced to the vastness of man's eternal interests; for life, after all, is a solemn reality; its interests are momentous; their grandeur eternity only can disclose.

When man awakes to his existence, he strikes a chord which will vibrate through endless ages, thrilling the heart with bliss, or sweeping the bosom with the wild cadence of woe. He embarks on the ocean, but he embarks but *once*, and eternity is suspended on the issue. He may weather the storm, and gain his wished-for haven, and he *may* lose his *all*. Perhaps he may hail from the deep as he ploughs the rough billows of a bottomless and shoreless sea, "the star of Bethlehem," and be guided "to the Port of Peace," and perhaps the darkness of the storm may quench its light for ever.

But man is not the sport of a blind destiny; then he might resign himself to its chains. But man is the lord of his own destiny: he is omnipotent to live or die. Yes, thanks to God, man is free, and the arbiter of his own fortunes in futurity; he is not a careless passenger over the deep, he is the pilot of his own bark, and sleepless must be his vigils. Should he be gay? Should he be thoughtless? He should be so-

lemn, for then only is he preparing for eternity; he should be thoughtful, for then only is he making his calling and election sure.

But it is not wrong to embark sometimes on the tide of emotion and joyance of soul which sweeps by the lonely heart; it is not wrong sometimes to yield to those delightful notes of pleasure which awake the soul to the marred vestiges of earthly bliss which have survived the fall. He whose heart beats with the benevolence of the cross, and lavishes his richest affections around it, is best prepared to pluck the rose of earthly happiness and leave the thorn.

Christianity is not a *gloomy* but a *solemn* religion, and she delights in encircling the heart of the child of God with the halo of happiness, and lays the words of nature and grace under tribute to form it; as the beauties of two worlds mingle to produce the various hues of the bow on the cloud. Religion dwells not in the heart of gloom, with *all* her train of gracious influences; but she delights in making her votaries *entirely blessed*, and when a beam of joy gladdens the heart, she loves to see it radiate the countenance and enliven the social circle.

Mary's was a solemn but a *cheerful* piety, and

she always wore a smile upon her countenance. Even her wayward fortunes could not chill the warm current of her social feelings, and misanthropy found no covert in her heart.

"The storm was loud, the night was dark" around her; but the light of religion illumined her bosom as its rays broke through the storm. We do not ask the world to contemplate religion in the palace of wealth, for then worldliness strips her of her charms: in so cold an atmosphere they cannot be fully developed. But we do ask them to enter the humble dwelling of obscure and indigent piety, which opens its thatched roof to the storms and winds of heaven, and see a mother, whose heart has been made desolate by accumulated sorrow, gather her fatherless children around her scanty board and the family altar, as she sends her notes of thanksgiving, wreathing up to the skies with the smoke of her cottage—that she is not entirely desolate—that she and her babes are sheltered from the bleak winds of heaven by so kind a covert—that she can satisfy their cries of hunger by a crust of bread, and quench their thirst with pure water—that God has loved her too well to suffer her to lay up her treasure on earth—that the light of the

everlasting Gospel illumines her dwelling; and finally, that when the gay and the opulent shall be cast houseless and homeless to wander through the long winter of eternity, that she humbly trusts, "after life's fitful fever," she will clasp her babes to her heart with the pearl of great price, as she takes her stand by the throne of God, complete in righteousness. Kindred to this was the triumph of Christianity in Mary's history. Mr. Bise has told me that the religion of Christ always seemed infinitely lovely to him, for it more than atoned to Mary for her desolate lot; for she was always cheerful, always happy.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Go, forget me; why should sorrow
O'er thy brow a shadow fling?
Go, forget me, and to-morrow
Brightly smile and sweetly sing."

THERE is one of Mary's letters in my possession which I have thought best to publish, although it will prove the truth of Shakspeare's sentiment—

"The current of true love never did run smooth."

Perhaps nothing better developes the character than this "gentle passion." It often discovers in those who are under its sway the littleness of jealousy, and sometimes the degeneracy of lust; in others, a vanity of winning affection only to render the heart desolate by disappointment. But there is no feature in man's depravity that excites more disgust in a generous bosom, or degrades its subjects to such a contemptible scale, as the mean vice of *coquetry*. An intelligent lady once remarked to me, "the heart of a coquette is

a compound of meanness, selfishness, degradation, and vanity." In a trying situation which called forth this letter, Mary exhibited some of the noblest elements of character.

Stockbridge, October 16, 1831.

DEAR B——,

* * I was pressed by sister J—— to go back with her to ———, and I confess I should have gone, had I not cherished too deep a regard for him who accuses me of flattery; who thinks I care nothing about him, even if I *ever* did; and who thinks I deem him unworthy of my choice. Believe me, B——, you judge me severely, as I can see no cause you have to cherish such a thought.

I have done just as much as I could do with maiden propriety to convince you of my attachment; and yet you doubt it. Perhaps I ought not again to assure you, under existing circumstances, how large a share you hold in the affections of Mary.

I thank you for your frankness in acknowledging that you have paid "*some attention*" to another young lady, and I was not displeased to hear that you had done so, as I remember when

I last saw you, you told me that the past six weeks had flown away rapidly, that you had enjoyed yourself "uncommonly well." I was pleased to hear it, and soon perceived the cause of your happiness.

I am glad you have visited Miss ———, (if that is her name,) as you are now better able to judge who is the most agreeable companion, and who, to all appearances, will make you the best wife. I think it is time for you now to choose, for you must either relinquish Miss ——— or myself; and do not be displeased if I admonish thee to choose wisely the wife of thy bosom and the companion of thy youth. Another pen than mine may paint the misery of thy life if thou heed not my counsel, although I think the old maxim in most cases to be a correct one, that "a good husband makes a kind wife."

I hope that the fear of my displeasure will not in the least influence your judgment or decide your choice. I *have* thought I had some claim to your heart, but I am ready to relinquish it if you find some other female more worthy of your hand. I will endeavor to give up my claim cheerfully, if you wish it, as I trust the happiness of my friends will be more highly valued than

my own; if not, my love would be selfish, and not worthy the name of noble friendship, which I think is the most enduring of all love. The love of romance is only a momentary passion, which expires as suddenly as it is called into being; while that love which is permanent, must be founded upon friendship which is pure, not selfish, and which will only be matured by reciprocated kindness and unity of feeling. If this has been my love, it will not vanish if you bestow your own upon another more deserving. No; I should indulge no unkind or unchristian feelings if I should hear that you were joined to another.

You know I have often told you, that if you ever found in this cold world one you loved deeper, to roll the dark wave of oblivion over the affection of Mary.

If your mind had been firmly established, you need not have feared to have trusted yourself a few weeks longer without binding yourself by a promise to me. It would be painful to me to think that it was only a *promise* which bound a young gentleman to me. If his affection for me is not strong enough to make him faithful, let him find some one he esteems enough to remem-

ber without the bonds of a verbal engagement; for he could not disappoint hopes he had fostered in a female heart without sacrificing his honor. I would have his love so pure and so deep that it would fasten upon the noblest elements of his nature. After what has passed between us, a promise would not increase our mutual obligation; for there is a language deeper than words, and obligations stronger than death, where not a letter is written and not a word spoken.

The "*one*" who has told you that I designed to excite your hopes only to damp them, has cruelly injured my feelings, and perhaps may have shaken your confidence: but the stroke is light, for it falls upon an innocent heart. But you do not believe it. * * * * * * Write soon, and speak with freedom and frankness, and I will at least *respect* you for it. I wish a decisive answer; and tell me if you wish me to say, that at some future and convenient season, should heaven smile upon our designs, I will become your wife. * * * *

Never mind; Miss ——— won't feel bad if you do write to a "*factory girl*," and if she does, you may show her my letters and *your own!*

Your affectionate

MARY.

There are some admirable features in this letter. It came from a confiding and benevolent heart, it displays a magnanimity not often to be found, for she had concentrated all her hopes upon a bridal hour.

Her heart, which had been pierced with the keen dart of sorrow, was now filled with anticipations of future joy from this contemplated union; and yet she consented to abandon this last covert from the storm, where she had garnered up her affections, and once more wander the barren track of life friendless and alone.

The independence, dignity, and frankness of this letter were worthy of herself. It cannot be supposed that *mere prowess of mind* would sustain her in such a step; for who does not know that the female heart cannot survive the wreck of its affections? But the cause is explained in one of her letters, where she says to a friend:—

"I have learned, dear ———, that I must not entwine my heart around any earthly object so closely as to feel the shock when it is torn away. I am conscious that I love my Redeemer so much better than any thing else, that I do not feel disappointment: for no rude wind of misfortune can ever shake this strong fortress of my hope.

I feel that 'my heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord,' and I 'shall not be afraid of evil tidings.'"

I have found only one more letter to Mr. Bise among her papers, of which the following is an extract:—

"You call me an affectionate girl. I thank you, and could you read my heart, I trust you would see the appositeness of that endearing epithet. You seem to anticipate much happiness in our future life. Dear B——, we shall be happy, or it will be *our* fault. We do not expect to be exempt from little troubles; but if the spirit of kindness governs our actions, it will prove a firm bulwark against every assailment of this kind; and union of soul and harmony of feeling, with the grace of God to sustain us, will triumph over all difficulties incident to social life, and cause the heavy afflictions we may experience to pass lightly over our retreat.

"I cherish no fears that our love will lose its strength if it part with some of its fervor. The only misfortune *peculiar* to the married state is the decay of mutual love. Hence the idea of 'the Honey-moon;' and they who talk of it are those who have never felt that deep affection, which sur-

vives the revolution of the heavenly bodies, and even death itself.

"After *their* honey-moon is past, unkindness, like a seven-headed monster, is continually creeping into the social scene in the form of cruel words and painful actions, which darken the brightest features of domestic life, and even blot out the cheerfulness of the fireside.

"But a brighter lot is in reserve for us. I feel that our union of soul is so complete, that unkindness will never intrude to desecrate the sacredness of our love. In you I expect to find all I hope for this side the tomb—*reciprocal love.* I will cling to you with tenderness and confidence, and I expect not only the protection of your arm, but the devotion of your heart.

"But if we do not expect a paradise here, and we must not, let us live in the fear of God, and we may expect one hereafter, beside 'the stream of life.'

"Your own affectionate

"MARY."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"And say, without our hopes, without our fears,
Without the home that plighted love endears,
Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh! what were man? a world without a sun."

CAMPBELL.

At length Mary's bridal day came, and on the 8th of September, 1832, she was married to Mr. Benjamin Bise of Green River, with whom she had long been intimate, and for whom she cherished the most devoted attachment.

She was in the freshness and beauty of youth. She had seen but twenty-one summers, but her accomplishments were superior to her age and fortune. For several years her health had been better than she had ever enjoyed; but it was still delicate.

Although her hopes had been consummated, and she began to realize all she had hoped for in a scene of retired domestic love; although she had at last found a safe retreat from all the misfortunes which had previously embittered her

life in the home of her affection; although she lived in her native valley, on the verdant bank of the Green River, guarded by the Blue Mountains, and the solemn temple, "whither the tribes go up," overshadowed her dwelling; yet the insidious approaches of disease began to mar this lovely scene, and she was reminded, by frequent and painful attacks, that she had "here no continuing city." She knew that she must soon leave these lovely scenes; but the thought of death did not ruffle the calm of her soul, and she addressed herself with calmness and serenity to the duties of life, she greeted probation with joy, and awaited death with cheerfulness.

Her soul was stayed on God, and a deep and abiding consciousness filled her bosom that when this earthly house of her tabernacle was dissolved, she would have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This consciousness threw a radiance over the rough features of disease, and softened the rugged declivities of an early exit. There is still preserved a fragment of a most chaste and beautiful composition which she wrote at this time, which exhibits in lively colors the nature of her feelings. She says:—

"What are the real enjoyments of human life? It will be admitted by all, that unalloyed happiness dwells not on earth. The frailty of our mother has contaminated our most exalted terrestrial pursuits. Yes, we taste the bitter fruits of thy fatal transgression, and our own equally reprehensible guilt.

"But let us not condemn life as perfectly wretched, because we do not find happiness unmixed with pain. When we acknowledge that our earthly enjoyments are all incomplete and unsatisfactory, will it follow that there is no object on earth which deserves our pursuit, or that all our pleasures become contemptible because they are imperfect?

"Let us contemplate our condition with an impartial eye, and be just to the various gifts of heaven.

"Surely there is much, very much in life that is desirable, although sin has clouded our brightest scenes of earthly joy. But how vain soever this life, considered in itself, may be, the comforts and hopes of religion are sufficient to give solidity to the enjoyments of the righteous. Besides the ineffable enjoyments peculiar to the glorious hope of the Gospel, there are other pleasures attainable

in our present state, which we should not overlook in this estimate of human felicity.

" Great importance should be attached to the surpassing comforts of health, to the innocent gratification of the senses, and to the delight afforded by all the beautiful scenes of Nature; some, to the pursuits and amusements of social life, and more to the intellectual enjoyments of thought and reflection, and to the pleasures of affectionate intercourse with those we love.

" Our estimate of these objects is often too low, and because they are devoid of novelty, we consider them destitute of interest. Too much could not be said by an eloquent pen in favor of the social union: without the bonds of friendship and the ties of love, life would be a sterile wilderness. Could my inglorious fingers touch the harp, its first notes should be of friendship's lays. Some say we worship an imaginary shrine; yes, they coldly say:—

> ' Oh! what is friendship but a name,
> A charm that lulls to sleep;
> A shade that follows wealth and fame,
> But leaves the poor to weep.'

" Preserve me from the theory of such cold-hearted sensualists, who only value themselves

and their contracted interests. May my heart ever be alive to the pleasures of refined sensibility and the sweets of domestic and connubial love.

"If we find not a tolerable degree of happiness around our own altars, where shall we seek for it? We may search for it in the labyrinths of science, the pursuits of wealth, and the glittering fields of ambition, or the degraded pathway of the voluptuary and sensualist; we may fly to the haunts of dissipation, believing that we shall find our object; but from all these we shall turn aside disgusted, and exclaim—she dwells not here.

> 'Disappointment lurks in many a prize,
> As bees in flowers, and stings us with success.'

The soul cannot find its appropriate sphere, except in the paths of holiness; and satisfaction attends nothing but the service of God."

It is rational to conclude that such an estimate of temporal and spiritual enjoyments must have been matured by thought and experience. It was the conclusion she drew from an expanded and noble view of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, aided by the illuminations of the Holy Ghost. The literary tone of this article speaks for itself, and its moral features are above praise or criticism.

The allusion she makes to the endearing charities of social life, must find a response in every generous bosom, which is the seat of those virtues which redeem life from some of the blighting influences which surround it.

She exhibited those virtues which are the theme of her encomium in her walk and conversation, and her own domestic circle admirably illustrated their benign influence upon the heart. The cares and anxieties of her family seemed to elevate rather than depress her high-toned spirituality; and her unwearied beneficence was more fully developed in this new sphere.

Her health declined somewhat rapidly after her marriage; disease seemed to be fastened more deeply upon the vitals of her constitution, till it was perfectly evident she must *soon* fall a victim to consumption, that "cruel messenger," which destroys so much loveliness and beauty; which clouds so many bright scenes; which dashes such high-wrought hopes to despair; which so often invades the sanctuary of connubial affection, when heart mingles with kindred heart beneath the purple light of love.

In the fall of 1833 she was again brought to the brink of heaven by another severe illness,

and her life was despaired of by her physicians: she expected to die. But

> "She could not bear, methinks, to leave this earth,
> And him more loved than aught beneath the sun,
> Till she had lived to smile but on the birth
> Of one dear pledge, a gentle little one
> To clasp her neck ——"

Heaven, always better than our fears, and often kinder than our hopes, seemed

> "E'en while life's last pulses run,"

to crown her early exit with this boon of a fond female heart, and she smiled on "her only son."

Life seemed now to possess irresistible attractions. She had a kind husband, and loved him ardently; and that magnet of a mother's heart, "a blooming boy that looked like her," prompted, we should think, a prayer that she might linger yet a little longer on the shores of time; but she had long before put her house in order, and seemed entirely ready and willing to die.

Her friends contemplated her condition with melancholy; and her husband, who had "no balm in Gilead or physician there," anticipated her departure with that grief which expects no oil of gladness from the King of kings. Her friends

bent their sorrowful steps to her dwelling, and consecrated the scene of her resignation and triumph with tears of Christian sympathy. The author, if his name may appear in this connexion, was confined during this long winter, in a near residence which commanded a view of her own, on a couch of dangerous and painful disease. Daily the kind ministers of our mutual sufferings visited our chambers, to bear the messages of Christian affection from lips that expected soon to join in "the Everlasting Song."

Her words, which those I yet love bore to me from her sick bed, seemed like the wandering echoes of the music of heaven to nerve my soul for "the swellings of Jordan;" they not only said, "come, see how a Christian can go down the dark valley, leaning on the bosom of her Redeemer," but were like to a burst of song "from a door opened in heaven."

There was something that seemed omnipotent to charm the soul into the elysium of eternal joy in every word that found its illumined way from her couch of triumph to mine of "trembling hope."

During this season, her pastor visited us every day, to administer the consolations and encou-

ragements of "the everlasting Gospel," and it will be long ere the author forgets his luminous and spiritual views of the religion of the Saviour, or the ardent and fervid breathings of his devotion around the suffering pillow.

But if such were the feelings of her *friends* respecting her departure, her own were vastly different. No sadness or gloom seemed to mingle with her thoughts or come near her pillow. She says to a female friend at a period of critical illness :—

"It is not with melancholy that I view this wasting frame, that I see myself gradually but surely sliding into eternity ; for I possess the hopes and consolations of Christianity."

At length, after a winter of pain and sickness, in which we had both been called to the mount of vision to look off upon the Promised Land, but not suffered to go over, we began slowly to recover. I recollect vividly my emotions when a beloved brother, and a mother who has since been removed triumphantly to heaven, drew my chair to the western window of my chamber where I could see Mrs. Bise's house, I looked forth again upon the beautiful world, which had for months been shut out from my sight, and felt a thrill of joy which is felt but once or twice in the longest

existence. The chains of winter were yet unbroken, and the snow still lingered upon the tops of the mountains. The sun was shining brightly, and fast gliding down the western sky; I looked forth upon the happy world which I had bidden farewell, and oh! how happy was that blissful moment. I saw the residence of Mrs. Bise, which I had so long wished to behold, and a sacredness seemed to linger around it which I cannot describe. I was fast returning to health; but from her frame disease seemed unwilling to unclench his rude grasp. I asked, who maketh us to differ? A current of deep emotions swept through my breast, and then I promised my God that if I ever went forth again among men, I would preach "the everlasting Gospel." I have fulfilled my promise; with what faithfulness let the Judgment day reveal.

As soon as I was able to go out, I visited the sick bed of Mrs. Bise. It was one of those balmy mornings of spring which break forth like magic after the winter is past, with its music of birds and fragrance of flowers. Only a few days before all was desolation and gloom. But the snows had dissolved, the brooks began to murmur, the birds had returned, and verdure was spread through the valley.

I entered her dwelling with peculiar feelings, for I seemed to be treading upon "holy ground." Mrs. B—— was sitting in a rocking chair, and a smile rested on her countenance; her cheek was crimsoned with the hectic flush, which, like the Syren, encircles with beauty the footsteps of the "king of terrors."

I had seen her but once before, when I was wandering through the vale of the Housetonic, on the banks of that lovely river, (classic to every lover of literature,) which sweeps gracefully by "Sacrifice Rock," and a little farther on by the dwelling of her who has made that grey old rock immortal. About two miles from "Sacrifice Rock," the Housetonic turns a large factory, and there I saw Mary tending her loom. As I entered the factory, I singled her out from the multitude, for there was something irresistibly attractive in her countenance, manner, and conversation. I was astonished to find such intellectual and moral culture, such a polished address, uncommon grace and beauty of person, all blended and refined by the grace of God in such a scene. I could not reconcile her graces with her fortune, and felt anxious to know something of her history. She said,

"I am poor, and have always suffered with ill health; but I have never complained, for I know that the judge of the earth will do right." I learned all but her name and residence; and these she studiously concealed. I left her, and was proud to vent my emotion in tears. I did not know till after her death that it was Mary.

I spent an hour in her house, and her spirituality of soul and devotion of feeling all combined, rendered that hour one of the most delightful I ever spent on earth. I parted with her, and never saw her afterwards. About this time she addresses an absent sister:

LOVED SISTER JULIA,

You know the writing, and have said ere this 'tis Mary's. Yes, Mary yet lives, and can write to you with a trembling hand. But

"The King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings."

I think I feel grateful for his continued mercies. But in life or death, may the great end of my existence be answered in glorifying my Redeemer.

* * * * * * It is some months since I wrote to you; but, long as it is, I have hesitated about writing to you even now,

for I have not forgotten, although I have endeavored to, all the reproaches I had in store for you. You *do* deserve some censure, dear J——, and your unsisterly neglect has caused me some tears, even upon a bed of languishing ; but I forgive you freely. I could easily have passed by your neglect, had not my situation been peculiarly trying. When I wrote to you last, my heart was yearning to unbosom to you all its hopes and fears, and I thought I could not wait a week for an answer ; and now *months* have passed, and still no message of love wings its way from my absent Julia. But I forgive it all like a sister. * * * * There seems little prospect of my tarrying long *here*. The consumption, that disease of diseases, pursues me closely through every path of life, and will follow me till I pass the gates of the celestial city. My physician thinks if I can pass the critical spring months with safety, the warmth of summer will invigorate my enfeebled system.

But may I be clothed with a Saviour's righteousness for a departing garment, that I may make the summons of death welcome. *

* * * Your affectionate sister,

MARY.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Tis the last blooming summer these eyes shall behold,
Long, long ere another, this heart shall be cold;
For oh! its best feelings on earth have been chilled,
And I grieve not that shortly this pulse shall be still."

Spring came, and melted into the glorious summer; fragrance floated on the breeze, and verdure crested itself upon her native mountains. The Green River, on whose willowed banks Mrs. B—— had so often wandered in other days, with gentle murmur glided by the scene of her suffering. Could you have felt the inspiration of that scene of beauty, grandeur, and repose, you would have scarcely thought that the rude messenger of death would be permitted to invade so lovely, so delightful, so consecrated a spot.

If you had stood on a rugged bluff on the east of that valley, and looked down, you would have seen the romance of nature; a proud bulwark of his mountains reared on the east and west, whose heights are tamed with the hand of husbandry, and whose sides are dotted with the habi-

tations of men ; the neat white dwellings scattered along, embowered with foliage ; the solemn temple where they worship under your feet, shooting its spire towards heaven ; the green waters of the beautiful stream flowing gaily onward,

> " Making sweet music with th' enamel'd stone,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
> He overtaketh in his pilgrimage ;"

its course marked by the willows, that line its banks and betray its wanderings, now rushing down the hills from the north and the mountains around, and collecting its waters as they glide, by bearing their music to every dwelling in that happy valley ; look away to the south, and follow him as he passes a defile where the mountains almost lock their giant arms, he rushes onward—

> " And so by many winding nooks he strays
> With willing sport to the wild ocean."

Oh reader, you may traverse the world, and you cannot find a scene superior to this. Now turn towards the west, from the spot where you are standing, and you will see an humble dwelling

on a little eminence within a few yards of the stream, whose music wanders through a woodbine lattice; it is a consecrated scene, for it falls upon ears which will soon drink the melodies of heaven. It is the home of Mary: it is sacred, for the Holy Ghost, with all his train of gracious influences, is there, and the ministering angels of the new covenant are hanging around her pillow. It is a scene of cheerfulness and triumph. This was the last year of her life, and for the most time she was confined to her bed; a year in which she suffered intense pain, without ever repining at the hand of Providence; a year in which she anticipated death with almost every setting sun, and yet no cloud or sadness came near her pillow.

The reader's attention will be solicited for a longer period than is usually devoted to the closing scenes of such a nature for several reasons.

There are some delightful features upon which we shall love to dwell.

Her sick bed was a scene of *unclouded cheerfulness*, and not a thought of gloom shall cloud these remaining pages, for such a line in this picture had no original.

It was also a scene of *perfect neatness* and

good taste, and nothing was ever witnessed around it which did not awaken some generous or cheerful emotion in the heart. Besides, the closing scenes are preserved in the memory of her friends with a freshness which imparts to them an additional interest, and the materials for her history become more and more worthy of contemplation as she approached nearer and nearer to her Father's house; till for a few months before her departure, her sick room seemed to be the very vestibule of heaven, a celestial atmosphere lingered around it, which all observed and which all remember; for it distilled its cheerfulness and solemnity alike over every heart. It is necessary for the reader to be guided by these facts as he goes with me down to the end of her journey, for without their light he will fail to receive those impressions of her last scenes which constituted their peculiar features, for which no other death-bed I have ever seen or heard of has been distinguished.

The last year of her life was wonderfully peaceful and appropriate to her living character; her dismission from life was serene, and almost imperceptible at the last. Death was delayed so much longer than she expected, that she was for

a great while in an attitude of "looking for and hastening unto the day of the Lord."

She wrote frequently in her journal during this period, and occasionally letters to her friends. Her Journal was all destroyed by herself a short time before her death, and only two of her letters are in my hands. But in the absence of better *data*, we will endeavor to delineate her "latter end" from her conversations and the few writings that remain. They are full of interest, for they are the exercises of a mind of the finest order, illuminated by the lights of a neighboring eternity.

The following is the last letter she ever wrote to her sister Julia, who was her favorite correspondent; it is dated six months before her death:

Thursday morning, July 24th, 1834.

Dear Sister Julia,

Yes, *very* dear have you become to my soul, partner of my childhood, companion of my youth, and counsellor of my advancing years, my near, my dear though absent sister. Yes, Julia, my heart clings to all the dear objects of my early and later love; but this tie is not too strong to be severed; for there is no union of hearts on earth that must not be dissolved. If this world were our

final rest, then, living or dying, we could never be blest. But, thanks to him who giveth us the victory, who stripped death of all his fierceness, and rendered him the welcome, yes, the joyful messenger of release from this thraldom of clay and sin. Death may appear terrible to this shivering, trembling flesh ; but we have nothing to fear whose feet are planted upon the Rock Christ Jesus ; for his language is, " fear not, for 'tis I who opens the gate of eternal life and glory to all who have fled for refuge to the stronghold." Dear J——, let us ask ourselves, as on the verge of eternity, have we this hope ? Let us look diligently into our hearts and Bibles to see if our expectations will stand in the great day of reckoning. Are you not still seeking happiness in worldly good ? and have you not lived long enough, and found disappointment enough, to convince you 'tis folly, 'tis a bubble you seek ? You indulge a hope, dear Julia, that you have passed from death unto life ; that you have found the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Cling to that rock, dear J——, for it will shield you from all the burning suns of life and the storms of death. May your light shine like a beacon set on a hill, that all who see it may glo-

rify its author. Be faithful, oh ! be faithful, I entreat you, to your husband and children. I know not but Brother H—— believes himself a Christian. I hope he is. But if he is not, let me warn you, my dear brother ; listen to *her* voice who stands on the brink of the tomb, and warns you to flee from the wrath to come. Let not my cry to God be unavailing, that your eyes may be opened to see your need of being washed in the atoning blood of the Son of God. If you both felt that you could commit your all to the Saviour's trust, and confide all your interests into his hands with resignation ; oh ! you would not part with that sweet feeling for worlds. *
I have said little of my health, but I suppose you are conscious I am near my *home*. Dr. Wright, a physician from Lebanon, eminent for skill and piety, has visited me several times, and afforded me partial relief ; but gives me no encouragement about getting well, and surely he cannot. He says, " You may linger a sojourner some time longer, but it would not be surprising if your exit was soon and sudden."

He told me nothing more or less than I believed before, and it gave me no anxiety.

And now, dear Julia, I charge you not to give

yourself any anxiety about me, whether I live or die. If I should linger much longer a weary sojourner here, may I be the happy instrument of doing some good to my fellow-creatures; if I can, how richly shall I be repaid for all my sufferings; but if I die soon, and I expect to, how much should we all rejoice that I am taken, thus early in life, from this world of care and suffering to a brighter clime,

> "Where everlasting spring abides,
> And never-withering flowers."

The Saviour said to his sorrowing disciples, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said I go unto my Father." So, dear J——, must you rejoice when you hear that this weary head is laid to rest

> "Beneath the turf that I have often trod;"

for I die with the full hope of eternal blessedness. I do not find any resources of hope in my own heart, but I look away to the Lamb of God, and see a fountain of righteousness, which even my guilt cannot exhaust.

When I contemplate the lonely situation of my husband and babe after my departure, when

I think of parting with those I love, whom I shall see no more till time shall be no longer, I sometimes feel a little melancholy for a moment; but, thanks to Him who has promised support to the desolate and comfort to the afflicted, I have entrusted them all to Christ, who can pour oil into the mourner's bosom, and light up the darkness of misfortune with the hope which maketh not ashamed. My babe has been from me for five weeks. None but a mother can tell how I felt to resign him; but 'twas necessary. I loved the little creature too well, and it was best my idol should be torn away. I shall see him again soon; though the Lord smite me sorely, yet will I love Him, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. * * * * *

Your departing Sister,

MARY.

She here alludes to a scene of indescribable interest and feeling, which occurred a few weeks previous to the date of this letter. Speaking of it, she says to her pastor:—

"I have experienced a severe pang in giving up my child; but since I performed the act, I have felt not a single anxiety: he is no longer

my child, but *the child of Providence.* I *did* feel much solicitude for him, but I have made him over unto the bosom of God, and since that I have not felt one anxious thought."

Several times after this her babe was brought to her: she would clasp it to her bosom, and breathe on its cheek a mother's prayer, and give him a mother's blessing when he was taken away, expecting to see him no more till she should greet him in heaven.

These were scenes of great tenderness and moral beauty, combining some of the most rich and cheerful features of the love and piety of a mother's heart.

Her calmness and self-possession amidst the trying scenes she passed through, were astonishing, particularly on the following occasion :—

In the October before her death, a large shop belonging to her husband, and standing very near the house, accidentally took fire. In consequence of a high wind the flames rapidly spread over every part of the building, and endangered the house where Mrs. Bise lay sick. It was the opinion of all present that *the house* must be destroyed, and under this impression the furniture was removed. The utmost anxiety

was felt for her safety, for, on account of her great debility, it was thought that she could not bear to be removed. While every mind was harassed with anxiety, she was *calm* and *unmoved* while they were fixing upon the best plan. Under these circumstances, by a kind of preternatural effort, she left her bed, gathered up all her husband's papers, and many little valuable things in the house, and went out. When she appeared at the door, she seemed to the crowd like one from the dead; and without experiencing the slightest perturbation in her own feelings, she was seized and carried by an agitated multitude to a neighboring house. She afterwards said that she never expected to return again. "For," says she, "I had no expectation of surviving such an exposure, and I supposed the house would burn down of course."

And yet she passed through the whole scene of panic and anxiety without the slightest injury to her health. The same evening she was carried back to her quiet dwelling, after the flames were subdued.

She attended church all through this summer, when she expected to die every week: her presence excited peculiar emotions among the con-

gregation. She had so long been resting on the bosom of the Saviour, that she seemed to have caught much of His loveliness: her countenance, which was always sweet, seemed now to possess an unearthly beauty, that irresistibly chained the attention of all present. Thus it continued, sabbath after sabbath, till the storms of winter came on, and she went out no more. When she could no more attend the solemn feasts of Zion, she would watch the assembling of the congregation as they wound along the valley, and fasten her eyes upon the house of God as she repeated those beautiful lines of Watts,

> "My soul shall pray for Zion still,
> While life or breath remains,
> There my best friends, my kindred dwell,
> There God my Saviour reigns."

In the early part of autumn she sent up to God's house the following request which was publicly read from the desk:

"Mary Ann Bise, believing her sojourn on earth almost finished, feels an anxious desire that she may enjoy the blessings arising from the united prayers of this dearly beloved church to Almighty God in her behalf.

"Knowing that all strength, reason, peace, and

joy come alone from Him who has ordained prayer as the medium whereby we may receive a supply to all our wants, let us come with all boldness, knowing who is our great Advocate and Intercessor.

"Permit me, my dear brethren and sisters, the smallest and weakest of all called your members, earnestly to entreat an interest in your prayers, that I may enjoy the special favor and presence of the Almighty comforter upon this bed of languishing, and in all probability this abode of death; that I may enjoy the use of my reason, if consistent with the divine disposal of events, to life's extremest verge; and that when the dark waves of death encompass me, I may be upheld by the arm of my Almighty Redeemer. But if reason and strength both fail me, may I be enabled to give myself wholly away to Christ, and feel at rest.

"Where else, dear friends, is the place of rest, safety, refuge, or happiness, but a parent's arms? Oh! what love that he calls us, vile and polluted as we are; yes, he calls even *us*, and makes us welcome there. How can we love him so little when his favor and continued mercy are so inexpressibly great to us. Oh! that our hearts may

be aroused to a deep sense of his goodness; that we may love him better; that we may feel more ardently the worth of souls, and be stimulated to labor more faithfully for their salvation.

"My dear young friends and fellow-members of this church and congregation, the deep anxiety I have felt and still feel for your future usefulness, impels me to lay aside the natural reserve of my disposition, and address you very plainly upon your soul's concern. Like yourselves, I have enjoyed days of health and gladness; but now this wasted frame reminds me of speedy dissolution, that the flesh but waits the signal of its God to drop into the dust. The retrospect of my past life affords matter of regret that I have not been more determined to serve my master faithfully, let others do as they may.

"Beloved young friends, who have but lately set out in the straight and narrow way, oh! that you would press steadily on to the prize in heaven. The time is short; pray and labor much for the prosperity of Zion; exhort one another to vigilance, and let your example in the presence of the thoughtless and indifferent be such as will glorify our Father in Heaven.

"That we may *all* glorify Him in body and

spirit, and at last meet joyfully at his right hand, is the ardent wish of one who meets you no more in the sanctuary; but whose earth-encumbered spirit loves to mingle with you there, and will love you dearly while consciousness remains.

"May the God of all consolation and infinite mercy dwell in you richly, now and forever.

"MARY ANN BISE."

Sept. 20*th*, 1834.

The reading of this paper in church produced a prodigious effect upon the congregation, which was bathed in tears.

But a scene of vastly deeper interest was soon witnessed by the church, which will never be erased from a single heart there.

On the first sabbath in November, on the day for the stated administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the church, after that solemn service had been performed in the sanctuary, her pastor, with the office-bearers of the church, and as many members as could conveniently assemble in her dwelling, repaired thither by her special request to celebrate once more with her the dying love of the Saviour before she went to drink new wine with him in his kingdom above.

The scene was one of indescribable tenderness and solemnity. The expiring sufferer lay upon her bed, apparently just about to wing her flight to that world where ordinances are to cease. "It seemed as though the light of eternity," says her pastor to me while describing the scene, "poured its radiance over the elements which shadowed forth the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

"At the close of the singing of the hymn, and just before the benediction, with a countenance that shone like that of an angel, she made a short address to her brethren and sisters in the Lord.

"She conjured them, by the Saviour's love for them, and by all their hopes of heaven, to walk together in the most affectionate manner in the household of faith; to cultivate the utmost susceptibility in regard to the claims of a dying Saviour; and exhorted them to labor for God with the utmost diligence while it was called to-day, for the lamp of life would soon go out, and probation scenes close upon them for ever.

"'We cannot,' said she, 'love too much, or pray too fervently, or labor too earnestly, for our exalted Redeemer.'

"The scene became overwhelming; every face was bathed in tears, and the impressions of

that day will probably never be forgotten by those who had the happiness of being present in her room, which all felt to be

> "Privileged
> Above the common walk of virtuous life,
> Quite in the verge of heaven."

CHAPTER XX.

"Heaven waits not the last moment, owns her friends
On this side death, and points them out to man."

YOUNG.

PERHAPS the force and blessedness of this truth was never illustrated with more signal effect than in the case of Mrs. Bise.

The interest of her declining scenes was not abated by any *decline in intellect;* all the powers of her mind were unclouded and vigorous to the last moment of her life. Disease neither produced any fitful excitement, and never dampened her intellectual fires. Every faculty of her nature went on, and performed all its operations in a perfectly sound and healthful manner.

While from the elasticity of her mind she could at will mount up on the wings of faith, and sing at the "rosy gates of the morning," she could descend with grace and interest to the commonest details of every-day life. She continued through her whole decline to direct her

domestic arrangements, and attended minutely to all the interests which grew out of the diversified relations of social life.

She took an active concern in the *temporal happiness* of all who came about her; not the smallest circumstance which related to their welfare eluded her observation or escaped her sympathy.

So full was she of human sympathy, and so steady was the flow of her cheerfulness, that persons who commonly shrink back from scenes which take hold upon eternity, were *anxious* to crowd into her sick room; and even children who were known to dread such places, felt it a great *privilege* to go and see Mrs. Bise.

About three weeks before her death, when it was thought she was soon to expire, several of the neighbors were called in to witness her departure and minister their last friendly offices.

In the morning, however, she resuscitated, and was able soon to display the whole system of her charities. A young lady, who was sitting with her, was making a cape for a friend.

Mrs. Bise, who interested herself in every thing that related to human happiness, observed the process, and fitted it to one of her own pat-

terns, and made several suggestions from her own good taste to contribute to the perfection of the work.

Biographers have created many false impressions of the nature, and exhibitions of elevated piety in their works, principally by telling us that their subjects had all their thoughts concentrated, for a long time previous to their death, upon eternity, with such exclusive grasp that they could not sympathize with any object of human interest or pursuit.

But we have not so learned Christ. Judging by an elevated standard, derived from his example and the general principles of the Bible, we consider the perfection of human character to consist in the development of all those virtues which belong to all the relations we sustain.

While we dwell in these houses of flesh, and have a local habitation and a name in this world, it is noble and beautiful to exercise all the innocent emotions and susceptibilities which belong to our nature. The grace of God does not destroy these emotions and susceptibilities; but it invigorates them, and gives them an enlightened direction. It wins our hearts to a high admiration of the perfection of human nature when we

see an individual just bending his footsteps into the vestibule of heaven, and yet fresh and verdant with the most generous human sympathies.

It was affecting to see Mrs. Bise give her sympathies to the welfare, temporal and eternal, of all around her; while a voice was heard, saying, "Come up hither," from a door opened in heaven. Our master in this, as in every thing else, gave us the most perfect example. Amid the agonies of death upon the cross, the workings of natural affection were yet unbroken, and, guided by their impulses, he provided a home for his widowed mother.

In conditions of great debility, when the cloud of death hung full upon her view, she summoned up energy to go over a great deal of reading. The Bible and religious biographies were her chosen books. When others would have considered themselves excluded by debility from almost every occupation, she cultivated every department of industry which did not require much physical strength.

Some females of distinguished piety have been represented by their biographers in their last scenes as being so entirely overshadowed with an approaching eternity, that the intellectual

and social pleasures, all the sweet and endearing charities of home, were banished from their thoughts; that they could not participate with any enjoyment in any train of conversation which did not directly partake of eternal realities.

The biographer of Miss Mary Jane Graham has said, that for a long time previous to her death this eminently intellectual and gifted lady took no pleasure in listening to the wrapt conceptions of Romaine and Leighton.

But this was unlike Mrs. Bise. Her unabated taste for every description of mental improvement and enjoyment was not impaired by the progress of disease. Over the development of all these qualities the mellow light of eternity seemed to throw its soft and solemn radiance; over all her words and deeds there seemed to be a mystic charm borrowed from the neighborhood of a brighter world.

But the *chief interest* in the declining days of her probation was of a decidedly *spiritual nature*. It is with her religious character that we are now chiefly concerned, as it is that in its diversified workings, lighting down upon human happiness and salvation, and lighting up through Jesus Christ upon God's glory, that is of value to her now.

It had been evident to those who knew her, that the Lord had for several years been rapidly preparing her for himself, and that she was destined soon to unfold her sympathies in a milder and higher abode.

Her life had been one of deep and singular consecration to God, and her confident and joyous feelings on the near approach of death, were not the forcing up of a sudden flame of devotion, or the brilliant reflection of a new-born light shining in upon her from an opening eternity, but they were the advancing and advanced stages of the settled habits of her soul.

She slid down gradually and peacefully to the tomb. She had so long held converse with death at a distance, that she welcomed him as a friend while yet afar off. She had so long familiarized herself with everlasting objects, that she seemed to live in the very neighborhood of eternal scenes, and breathe the fervid atmosphere of heaven.

Most Christians cultivate so little spirituality of feeling and devotion, that they habitually contemplate death as being at a great distance, and only in moments of wrapt inspiration step across the threshold of the celestial temple. They cul-

tivate no intimacy with death, and it is necessary for them to rouse up all their energies and burnish up the armory of their faith when they enter the territory of the king of terrors. When they are arrested in their worldliness by the fear of sickness and the prostration of disease, the rude grasp of death sends a chill to the heart; they are unprepared and unwilling to die. If torn away suddenly, they experience little support and no triumph as the turbid waters begin to gather around them; they go down the bank with trembling steps, and we can only hear them breathe the faint notes of *submission* as they launch out upon "the swellings of Jordan." If they linger through the stages of protracted disease, their familiarity with these tremendous scenes, constant struggles of faith and prayer, aided by the consolations of pious friends and the stimulating promises of the word of God, *all* consolidated by the supports of the Holy Ghost, with their combined energies, often inspire them with a strong hope that they shall outride the storm, and hail from the deep, as they plough the rough billows of eternity's ocean, "*the Star of Bethlehem.*"

But such confidence can hardly be termed

Christian triumph. It seems to be the creature of circumstances, called forth by exigencies of the crisis.

Christianity wreathes her brightest laurels around the brow of veteran piety. The Christian who has long held intimate converse with God, and gathered fresh strength from a thousand combats with "the world, the flesh, and the devil," is clothed with an armory which he has worn off from a thousand victories, impenetrable to all the shafts of death. The subject of this memoir often anticipated the prostrations of sickness and the struggles of dissolution. She had accumulated the treasures of godliness, and acquired gigantic strength to march forth upon "enchanted ground." She had so often tested her strength with inferior enemies, that she was well nerved for her combat with her last. The stream of death, which undermines the dissoluble fabrics of so many hopes, passed without injury by the adamant of her own. She was not intimidated by the insignia of death, as its monarch trailed his dark pinions across her dying pillow. She needed no convulsive effort to prepare for dissolution, for her house had a long time "been set in order." *Submission* had vanished from

her countenance, *resignation* no longer played over her features, for *triumph* crested itself upon her brow. She neither withdrew from his approach or welcomed the coming of death, but *went forth to meet him.* She waited with intense delight every signal of approaching dissolution. Long and anxiously she awaited the coming of her Redeemer; and perhaps, in the whole duration of her being, no sound more grateful will ever break upon her ear than the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh."

CHAPTER XXI.

"A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." SOLOMON.

For several months before her departure, her pastor visited her every day, and sometimes repeated his visits during the day. In these successive visits he had an opportunity of observing the progress of her mind towards a glorified state. Her conversations, which were amazingly brilliant, he often caused to be written down, expecting, for many weeks while he continued this practice, to find occasion to use them soon in her funeral discourse.

I have been indebted to his courtesy for some of the materials for this work, and particularly her last conversations, which may be relied upon as given in her own language as it fell from her lips. The author of the "Elegy in a Country Church-Yard" has said, that "one line written on the spot, is worth ten thousand pages of recollections."

In a conversation with her pastor a few weeks previous to her death, she remarked,

"From the time I experienced religion, I have always had a prevailing desire to die: not from disgust or weariness of things of earth, but from the superior attractions of the joys of heaven. Possibly my physical condition may have contributed in some measure to this state of mind, but I think not very much: for I have always regarded all the innocent enjoyments of earth with a cheerful mind. I do not recollect a day in my life in which I have not experienced a considerable degree of pain; but I have had much deeper suffering from a sense of my own selfishness. My prevailing desire to die, seems to me to have arisen from abhorrence of my own sinfulness, and a deep perception of the purity of heaven. I have longed to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than to be here in the flesh; and I am sure that being with Christ is the Christian's heaven. I know it is a world of purity, for the presence of the Saviour banishes all sin. I think this about pictures out my strictly personal history."

In another conversation with her pastor, she inquired of him—

"Do you think it is sinful in me to desire to

die, provided I feel the sentiment of the Saviour, 'Not my will, but thine, Oh God! be done?' If it is, with God's help I will repress it and repent of it. It seems to *me* no more sinful to desire to die than to desire to *live*, provided we bring all our feelings into subservience to God's will."

The maturity of her faith was evident from the strength and rectitude of her reasoning on every moral question which came before her mind. She borrowed no unnecessary trouble. She says:—

"My thoughts are weak and wandering, and often drift far off from God and eternity; but this, I think, is the effect of disease. I need not, I think, write 'bitter things' against myself on this account. If I sometimes, through weakness and distraction of thought, forget my Saviour, I am sure he wont forget me."

She expressed great disapprobation of a sentiment in a letter from a correspondent of Miss Graham, which expressed satisfaction with death as a cessation from suffering.

"I am standing," says Mr. B. "on the awful brink of eternity, and am just about to take the tremendous step; but I cannot think of this step as a release from suffering. My sufferings are

all sweetened and sanctified by that God who makes all my bed in my sickness. The only cessation the Christian should think of in death with any pleasure, is a cessation from sin. I go to that world where God is the light of it, and where nothing that is impure can enter. This makes me more than satisfied with death."

She requested her pastor not to pray much that she might be exempted from pain; for, said she,

"I hope God will deal out to me all the sufferings that will be for his glory. I care little about it; I can bear it well, for I know it is dealt out in weight and measure by a perfect being. Shall I talk about suffering when my Saviour suffered so much more for me, and when the celestial city and my crown are full in view?"

Through her painful decline, she had more than an *acquiescence* in suffering; she *triumphed in* it and *over* it; it was sweetened to her taste by the delightful consciousness that it came from the hand of God. She says:

"It matters little whether my voyage to the desired haven be over a smooth or a turbulent sea: God will glorify himself in either case, and that is enough for me."

This was with her a favorite impression, and a matter in which she took a vast deal of comfort.

The visits of her pastor were constant and frequent. He remarked to me, while conversing on this subject,

"I found myself in these visits cut off one after another from most of the ordinary topics of prayer with the sick. I could not pray for her *recovery*, for she desired to depart and be with Christ: I could not pray for her *resignation*, for she was far *above* that sentiment: her resignation had long before risen into a triumph, and joy unspeakable and full of glory, and around her dying pillow I first realized the depth and sublimity of that glorious thought: for I have traced the exercises of many persons when dying that astonished me, but I never saw any thing that could be compared with these scenes which I am describing. I could not pray for her *preservation* from pain, for she welcomed it and triumphed in her sufferings; for, said she, 'these transitory afflictions are working out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

"I could not pray that even her entrance into

eternity might be made smooth, for she had no choice in regard to the matter, inasmuch as God would glorify himself whether her passage was rough or smooth. Indeed, sir, I found myself, in the latter periods of her sickness, very much shut up to the delightful work of praise: such were the victories of faith in this eminently godly woman." To her attendants who often asked her if she would have any thing more, she delighted in repeating the well-known thought of Melancthon,

"Nothing more but heaven."

The winter she died there were frequent assemblages of young persons in the neighborhood for social and convivial amusement. She heard with deep grief of these parties for frivolous purposes, and often spoke of the emptiness of such pleasures with tears, as she contrasted their hollow amusements with her superior joys. Ah! she was bathing her soul in that fountain of light and blessedness which gushes from the bosom of God.

Dying scenes commonly describe objects and interests which relate exclusively to the individual sufferer. But Mrs. Bise seemed to die as

well as live for others. She traced, with the utmost exactness, from week to week, and almost from day to day, the religious state of the church and congregation.

When she could no more go out to social worship herself, she inquired, with the most intense interest, after every religious meeting. She wanted to know the numbers and persons who attended; she was very inquisitive in regard to general and individual appearances of feeling. All the operations of benevolence that were in progress, and every measure which had any bearing upon religion, were apparently more interesting to her than what related to her own health and comfort. This shows how perfectly she was exempted from a self-inclosed individuality.

On the Friday evening before her death she said to her pastor—

"Do you think I shall die to-night?" He replied, "I think not." "I think not, too," said she; "but I think I shall die *about* on the coming sabbath. Oh, how beautiful to die on the sabbath day! to go from the rest of the sabbath on earth to the better rest of the sabbath in heaven."

She often spoke of dying on the Lord's day,

and longed to go over Jordan on the morning her Saviour emerged from its waters. She would often say—

"It must be delightful to join the ranks of the Redeemed on the day their chieftain obtained his conquest."

Sabbath after sabbath broke over those hills and valleys with their soft and holy light, and still she lingered thirsting for her departure "as the hart panteth after the water brooks."

During every stage of her last illness her mind was in a perfectly calm and serene state, equally removed from insensibility or excitement; while the healthful glow of spiritual feeling always enlivened her countenance and conversations. Sometimes in her wrapt contemplations she would break out in the most surprising language, expressive of the deep tide of emotions that was sweeping through her soul. All her conversations were pervaded by the most etherial elements; and even when confined to temporal affairs, seemed to be flushed with the light of heaven. But when confined to spiritual objects, she soared far above

"The reach of these inferior things;"

and after taking those who heard her into the portals of eternity, left them when they could climb no farther, and, borne on the eagle wing of her faith,

> "Mounted the realms by seraphs trod,
> Wrapt in the thought of immortality,
> Wrapt in the single, the triumphant thought."

But at such seasons she was perfectly self-possessed, and could call her mind back to any other train of conversation without any perceptible effort.

At one of these periods she turned to her pastor, who was sitting by her side, and said,

"Don't you think the joy of an emancipated spirit, the moment it escapes from its dark prison of sinful doubts and clouds of distrust, and is introduced into the palace of the King of kings, must be great? I do think," said she, "that it must be *very* great."

CHAPTER XXII.

"The death-bed of the just is yet undrawn
By mortal hands--angels should paint it."

YOUNG.

WE come now to the closing scenes of her existence, and they are to be described in the most simple and chastened language. But some of them were of such deep tenderness and unearthly elevation, that we shall not attempt their description. In allusion to them, her pastor, in his sermon at her funeral, remarked, that "they were fit to be enacted in heaven." We have aimed at great simplicity through the entire sketch, and the author has not on a single occasion gone beyond his theme; while in most instances, it is to be feared, he has not reached it. In writing the closing chapter, I feel like a Gentile who left the court of his people, and pressed his way into the holy of holies, which he trod with no less awe than we should tread in her dying chamber, which was none other than the house and the gate of heaven.

During her declining days she only *once* expressed a momentary anxiety in regard to her spiritual condition.

"Do you think," said she to her pastor on one occasion, "that there is *any* danger of my being deceived? or is it wrong to feel *such* confidence of my safety? I feel that I am on a rock, and have no solicitudes about being swept away; I feel the strength of my foundation; the cold waves of Jordan, I think, will dash against it in vain."

Her sufferings were sometimes acute, and when she had escaped from a paroxysm of pain, she would say,

"My heavenly father has bidden it, and I welcome it; for it will promote his glory, and work for my good."

The triumphs of her mind over her physical distress were prodigious. One attack of pain did not seem to weary her for a fresh encounter. The buoyancy of her faith and the clearness of her understanding were not perceptibly impaired by the assaults of disease and pain.

While prayer was being offered up at her bedside, she interposed a few petitions in the most emphatic manner.

"Oh God! dispose of me according to thy

own will; but why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming; oh! why tarry the wheels of thy chariot?" and then turning to her pastor, she says, "Sir, will you have the goodness to find that passage for me, that I may see its connexion?"

When she parted with her little child the last time, she put into his arms her pocket bible, and had a few lines inscribed upon its blank leaf, which were designed to win him to a love for his Bible by his affection for his dying mother.

For some time now her pastor had been able to say nothing of the dark valley in prayer or conversation; for, says she,

"The valley is not dark to me, it is bright with summer light."

Her faith, with its powerful wing, swept away all the clouds of the valley and all the dishonors of the grave, and made her passage from this world to the world to come resplendent with sunshine.

She had a deep sense of her personal unworthiness; and as through life she had always contemplated herself as an obscure and unworthy individual, so now she seemed to be as unconscious of her spiritual attainments as she had always been of her personal charms.

She said to her pastor, who in prayer acknowledged with devout gratitude, the grace which had steered her through so wayward and cheerless a lot, and at last brought her out on so bold an eminence as she was departing,

"My dear Sir, I am glad you offered that thanksgiving, and I can most heartily unite in it; but I don't desire to have you think of *me*, but of the grace of God that is in me."

All her prayers and efforts for the conversion of her husband had thus far proved unavailing, and she still felt the deepest solicitude for his salvation. She requested her pastor to look after his spiritual welfare, and entreated her husband often to visit Mr. Woodbridge after her decease.

The day on the evening of which she expired, her pastor called on her about three o'clock. She requested him to pray for her speedy release; but not being anxious, like herself, for her departure, he did not pray for this event so fervently as she desired, she raised herself up, and was sustained by her sister as she broke forth with most intense eagerness,

"Oh! Lord Jesus, *do* come quickly; oh, *why* are thy chariot wheels so long in coming?"

In some of the last stages of life, while her pas-

tor was at prayer, she held his hand, and signified her fervid approbation of certain petitions that particularly met her feelings, by pressing it.

I have conversed with those who watched with her some weeks before her death, and they say that she slept little during the night, and often requested them to read the Bible to her, and portions of religious works, and sing devotional hymns; and often she would join them. Thus passed her nights of weariness, which in most cases of the kind are scenes of gloom. Her watchers have all told me that it was a luxury to spend the silent hours of night by her bed.

On the morning of the last day her physician called on her, and she asked him how long she would live. He answered,

"I will tell you as near as I can, for I think it will not trouble you; I think you will die in the course of the day."

She instantly added,

"Oh, Lord Jesus! come quickly; my soul panteth for thee more than they who wait for the morning."

Her voice was natural and distinct to the last; there were no sepulchral tones; but the same winning grace and cheerfulness which had charac-

terized her through life, forsook her not even in death. Mr. Bise, her father-in-law, prayed with her at her request about sun-down. He waited a moment after the request, and she exclaimed,

"Oh father, pray quickly, for I am fast going beyond praying ground." After prayer she clasped his hand, and said—

"Farewell, dear father; and may the God of all grace be and abide with you forever."

Soon after this her sister left the house, and as she parted with her, she said,

"I shan't see you again, dear sister; but be faithful unto death, and Jesus Christ will give you a crown of life; and may God grant that all our family may meet in heaven."

During the day she experienced but little distress; her dismission was gentle and gracious. She was through the whole day looking out of the dark inn of her mortality into the summer path that stretched before her, and awaiting with serene satisfaction the moment of her departure.

She had strength from time to time to say tender things to those who came about her, and drop upon their consciences such exhortations as were appropriate to each.

At length, after the tender excitements of the

day, and the sun had just flung his last beams over the valley, with her head reclined upon the bosom of her husband, she breathed out her sanctified and triumphant spirit into the almighty bosom of her Saviour and her God; and another ransomed spirit joined the blood-bought throng of that innumerable company, which no man can number, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The news of her death soon flew through the neighborhood, and drew great numbers of her friends to the spot where she had expired.

They felt that earth had been made poor, and heaven richer, by this bereavement; they felt that it was a sad privilege to bend their steps to her dwelling, to catch one view of her faded garment

> "Before Decay's effacing fingers
> Had swept the lines where beauty lingers."

The weeping husband immediately sent for the pastor. When Mr. W—— arrived, he remarked to him:

"All is over; all my hopes are crushed; no one in *this* world knows what I have lost."

The pastor remarked to the company who were assembled :

"The scene is now changed, and the tone of prayer must be changed ; the room is hallowed ; a celestial atmosphere fills it ; we are in one of the fairest entrances to heaven ; the whole system of our associations and bent of our thoughts is now altered."

He then knelt in prayer, and during the exercise the most tender and convulsive sobs shook my bosom ; but a sweet and holy peace soon took possession of my mind, and all felt that this was one of the brightest eminences they had ever met in their pilgrimage ; for, like Mount Pisgah, it commanded an unclouded prospect of the Promised Land.

Thus died Mrs. Mary Ann Bise, on Friday evening, 19th of February, 1835, in the twenty-third year of her age.

The sabbath following her friends collected at her late residence and bore her remains to the church, near by where an immense concourse were assembled.

Her pastor delivered an appropriate, eloquent, and touching discourse from these words, which had been selected by Mrs. Bise for the occasion :

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto my Father."—John xiv. 29.

The tears of the congregation evinced their deep regard for the deceased, and a tide of emotion overwhelmed the house.

The choir then sung the following touching and beautiful hymn:

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er you languish,
Come, at the shrine of God fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish,
Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

"Joy of the comfortless, light of the straying,
Hope, when all others die, fadeless and pure,
Here speaks the comforter in God's name, saying
Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot cure."

The procession then paid their last tribute to the departed, as they bore her to her place of interment.

It was a sunny spot near her window, which she had selected for her resting-place when she walked out with her husband one beautiful evening of the last summer she spent on earth. She had planted a rose-bush by the spot, and watched its growth till the wild tempests of winter had shorn it of its beauty.

Here she was laid to rest by the hand of affection, and many were the tears of sympathy which bedewed her grave.

Thus was deposited this temple of the Holy Ghost in its last resting-place; and let no rude foot irreverently tread around it till the Archangel's trump shall break over her native valley, and burst her sepulchre as it gives back the hallowed dust of God's elect.

Two summers had passed away, and I visited the valley of the Green River. On a cool evening in September, with two female friends, I went to her grave. It stands in front of her cottage, and is enclosed by a neat white paling.

The sun was fast hiding behind the western mountain, and the cool breezes of autumn sighed mournfully over her grave. Two summers had rolled away, and the rose which she planted, still faithful to its trust, shed its fragrance over her tomb. All was hushed; not a sound was heard in the village, and silence had crested itself upon

her blue mountains. As the sun threw his parting rays over her sepulchre, they lighted up the countenance of a beautiful little boy who was standing in the door of Mrs. Bise's cottage. It was her little son:

"He was the child of Providence."

THE END.